

REFLECTIONS
ON THE
STAGE,
AND
Mr Collyer's Defence
OF THE
SHORT VIEW.

In Four Dialogues.

L O N D O N,
Printed for R. Parker at the Unicorn under
the Piazza of the Royal Exchange, and
P. Bask at the Sign of the Temple at the
Temple gate in Fleetstreet. 1699.

J. Bradshaw

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

STAGE

TO THE

AND

Right Honourable

Mr. Colley's Defence

Charles Montague

OF THE

CATHOLIC VIEW

checked

In Four Dialogues

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LONDON

Printed by the Author at the V. and W. in
the Strand, near the Royal Exchange, and
at the Sign of the Anchor, in the Strand, in the
City of London, on the 1st of May, 1741.
The price of the Book is 1s. 6d. per Copy.

have

have with him declar'd against a
Theatre, and those who vindicate
the Rights of the Writers, will
with their best Argument want
the most powerful Protection
to defend them from the par-

TO THE

cialty of the Publick. Thus In-
cessantly
Right Honourable
forc'd me to shew these Reser-

Charles Montague,

can influence the opposite par-
ty to read and say things which
a Controversy which they
Chancellor of the Ex-
chequer, &c.

is clear'd chiefly, in their fa-
vour. However, there are none
of 'em bold enough to op-
pose your Sentiments, and your
SIR,

opinion being against 'em they'll
As the dispute with the Stage
is drawing to an end, so
it seems to go off on Mr W-
ter's side, the greatest numbers

A 2

have

The Epistle Dedicatory.

have with him declar'd against a
Theatre, and those who vindicate
the Poets or their Writings, will
with their best Argument, want
the most powerful Protection
to defend 'em from the par-
tiality of the Publick. Thus Ne-
cessity, as well as Inclination,
forc'd me to shelter these Reflexi-
ons under My Name, that none
can influence the opposite par-
ty to read any thing further on
a Controversy, which they fancy
is clear'd entirely in their fa-
vour. However, there are none
of 'em bold enough to op-
pose your Sentiments, and your
opinion being against 'em they'll
not presume on a Majori-
ty to stand out against Reason
and Conviction. The Sovereign
Excellence of your Judgment
will

The Epistle Dedicatory.

will prevail over Faction and
Prejudice, and bring the most
obstinate Enemies of the Dra-
ma to Temper and Moderati-
on. The Beauty of your Geni-
us will make 'em asham'd of
their Malice and Ignorance:
and when we talk of you they'll
readily agree with us, that the
Muses even in this age, have
produc'd some things both use-
ful and pleasant. You'll pardon
me, Sir, that while I have your
Picture before me, I only view
those perfections which are most
agreeable to my subject. That I
avoid looking on what is great
and wonderful, and turn the
prospect to what is mild and
lovely. That I forbear menti-
oning those extraordinary Qua-
lities, which have render'd you

The Fifth Delivery.

the Glory of your own Nation;
the admiration of others, and un-
der his Majesty's Courage and
Conduct, the best support of
the Government, in its most
pressing exigencies. That while
with many millions I feel the be-
nefit of your Ministry, I omit
paying you those acknowledg-
ments, which every true *English*
man owes your prudent Coun-
cil, and happy administration in
the high Station to which his
Majestys Wisdom has advanc'd
you. The fears which restrain
me from pursuing so tempting
a Theme, will to you be the
least criminal part of this address
tho to the World they would
be inexcusable, but that tis ex-
pected from better hands, who

which have been
H H T A

The Epile Dedicatory,

are more capable to do it Justice, tho no man can be more willing than,

S I R,

Your most humble, and

most obedient Servant,

J. Oldmixon.

The named Majesty Oldmixon stands
and hails - like survey his arms & hands
and saying thus, **LET** ^{now there} **HE** ^{see}
As any eye Gods should two & two make four
He said & climbed a steeple by his height
Shot to the dark abyss & plunged down right
The serious judgement all the crowd admire
Who but & mark the deeper note the higher

are more capable to do it than
 those who no man can be more
 willing than

PREFACE

My dear friends, I have the honor to
 acknowledge the great interest
 which you have taken in the
 progress of the cause, and the
 satisfaction which it affords me
 to see that you are so warmly
 engaged in it. I have the honor
 to acknowledge the great interest
 which you have taken in the
 progress of the cause, and the
 satisfaction which it affords me
 to see that you are so warmly
 engaged in it.

THE
PREFACE.

MR. Collier flattery by the success his Book met with, that his Arguments were unanswerable, and that no body wou'd venture to attack him, shou'd be go on with his Views of the Stage or the Poets, has left off all measurement the Defence of his first Book, shewn himself in the colours others painted him before, and discover'd as much arrogance as could be expected from one of his extraordinary resolution. He uses indeed the word Ceremony with a great deal of affectation, has been furnish'd with some expressions which look like good breeding; yet tho he boasts much of his manners, he very seldom puts 'em in practice. If he has been plentifully rail'd at in Print, 'twas because he, and not the Poets, was the Aggressor, and had he not been proof against just Censure and true Raillery, he would have laid down his Arms; at least been on the defensive part, but he makes a new bustle, values himself on his noise, and bewails the silence We suffer'd under a great while, 'twas our fault We

be

The Preface.

began with them no sooner. Who he means by We, his Readers are at a loss to guess, nor can they imagin how he became privileg'd to use the Royal Stile, but he will be free with Dignities, 'tis his misfortune, and he rather deserves pity than blame for's. He says, some of the Stage Advocates pretend his remarks on their Poetry were Foreign to the business, and certainly they have good reason for what they pretend. If the Stage is not capable of amendment, why such care to inform the Poets how they may write better? I think they might have spar'd their Complaints against his Criticisms, they are so weak and impertinent, that I never heard of one Person who has been convinc'd by 'em. 'Tis true, he happen'd on those Plays which are most lyable to exception, but has made so little use of his opportunity, that his Adversaries need not be afraid of his Judgement, for the bars he can do 'em is as little to be dreaded as the mischief Mr ———'s Farces, the Amphitruon, Love in a Nunnery, Caesar Borgia, and Limberham, have or shall do the Age; those things being read by as few People now, as Mr Collier's Books will be ten years hence. He has shewn the delicacy of his Taste, by the pieces he chose to work on; they were little better than Rubbish before, Mr Collier has nicely found out some Places more dirty than others, which is very meritorious, and he ought to be proud on't. His friends should have advis'd him to have omitted his Remarks. His Profession, the particular squeamishness of his Conscience, might provoke him to war with the Lewdness and Profaneness of some

Co.

Cambridge *3581574* *251*
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Cambridge. *Town* *Commendable* in him to begin
to reform the Drama, and there was scarcely
another who profess'd Writing that way, who had
not declar'd for it. Religion had been so much as-
perg'd, that the Poet itself began to be disgusted.
Those who had any shame, blisht at the treatment
Virtue met with from our pitiful Writers.
Town Mr Collier's good Fortune to cry out first,
and he had been much more Happy, if instead of
declaring for the extirpation of this sort of Poetry,
he had touch'd on those faults which were really
such, and not made some passages (innocent in
themselves) guilty, by the meaning he put on 'em.
If he had directed those Gentlemen who are capa-
ble of diverting and instructing the Age, to the
means of succeeding, and not blacken'd 'em as much
as lay in his power, without the Ribaldry of Bil-
linggate, to render 'em incapable of profiting or
pleasing, by giving the world a mean Idea of their
Wit, and a frightful account of their Morals. If
he had done this, who would not have applauded
the attempt? On the contrary, he falls on their
Intellects, and dissects their Plays, Examines 'em
as much as he could like a man of Art, and as
zealous as he is for the cause of Religion, he could
not hide his Vanity, and was not satisfi'd with
being thought a good Christian, unless the Town
would believe him a Wit and a Critick. It must
be agreed with the multitude, that he has some
claim to the first of his Pretences, but I question if
any body who has the least acquaintance with the
Belles Lettres, can imagin he is at all qualify'd
for the last. A man that writes so irregular a
File

THE

It is possibly is not likely to be a *perfect* *model* of
Language; and certainly there were *appeals* at
that on such a Subject; which he *desires* to *refine*
as well as regulate the *Theatre*, that *in all* *Conver-*
sation has been *against* the *standard* of *Eloquence*;
Quoted with such *rough periods*, and *huddled* *rope*.
It *shows* with so many *incoherent* *Metaphors*, and *more*
things, as little as some may think it to be *the* *per-*
fect, because many have *mistaken* the *broken*
form of his *sentences*, for a *living* *Wit*, and *his*
weak *Eloquence* for a *fine* *way* of *writing*. *That*
has not a little *assisted* him in the *success* *him*.
But *found*, and the *apprehension* *for* *what* *of*
sense *one* *gave* *me*, and *if* *that* *part* of *his*
Discourse is *most* *cried* *up* *in* *these* *Dialogues*,
provided to be *that* *which* *has* *been* *described*, *we* *may*
hope *he* *will* *not* *long* *denies* *the* *people* *with*
his *Eloquence*. *The* *Dialogue* is *made* *up* *of* *things* *and*
be *managed* *with* *more* *freedom* *than* *a* *regular*
discourse, and *these* *Chapters* *containing* *pos-*
sibly *but* *what* *another* *might* *have* *observed*, *but*
has *the* *Short* *View* *and* *the* *Defence* *with*
the *same* *application*, *twice* *not* *though* *not* *necessary*
to *be* *very* *exact* *in* *the* *form*, *these* *of* *his* *objec-*
tions *which* *relate* *to* *the* *sense* *of* *Antiquity* *made*
its *authority* *are* *answered* *by* *a* *person* *whose* *Learn-*
ing *and* *good* *Sense*, *will* *doubtless* *be* *more* *than*
a *match* *for* *Mr* *Collier's*. *If* *he* *is* *dealt* *with*
somewhat *freely*, *let* *the* *Readers*, *especially* *those*
of *us* *who* *are* *exceedingly* *nice* *in* *Civility* *remem-*
ber, *that* *'tis* *Mr* *Collier* *who* *gave* *the* *first*
foot, *who*, *that* *he* *is* *mighty* *for* *distinguishing*
us *by* *their* *Professions* *and* *Quality* *has* *been*
[con-

The Preface.

Scandalous has be scandaliz'd his Adversaries; he has faln on the men, when he should only have attackt their Poetry, a sort of usage he condemns them for with respect to the Clergy. He seems very Jealous of his honesty, and one would think it being so tender a point, he should not have made the same errors in his Defence, which he was charg'd with in the Short View. 'Twas reasonable to hope there would have been none of those misceatations and unfair dealings his Compliments urg'd against him, and to which he has, in truth, said something, but so little to the purpose, 'tis Charity to call it so. He triumphs on the Victory he has obtain'd over Vice, and the help he has given Conscience and Modesty by his discovery of the danger of a Stage. He has indeed a peculiar Talent for setting Smut off to the best advantage, and making some of our Licentious Writers speak more obscenity than they ever was guilty of. If the world are oblig'd to him for this, and his endeavours to ruin their finest pleasure, by pretending 'tis fatal to their Virtue, they ought to give him publick thanks, and take care by their large Collections and Contributions, that he may have no reason to repent his opening his Mouth in their service. But the best and most valuable part of the Town have other sentiments of his Performance. They know well enough there were other reasons for his speaking at last, not quite so generous as he represents em; and can see, that tho perhaps he succeeded in his Chief End, what he made subservient to it, was nothing but pretence, as will be demonstrated in the following Pages; and the Reader

The Preface.

As it is desired to be favourable to the General Charge made against him in this Preface, since the particulars will be prov'd on him hereafter. I should now give the Characters of the Persons introduc'd in these Dialogues, but I have observ'd that in these cases men are us'd to mean of themselves all that they say well of their fine Gentlemen; and the World have been too much surfeited with this piece of Vanity. I rather chuse to leave my persons and their reflections to the Candour of the Reader, who will use 'em well if he thinks they deserve it, if not, all that I can say for 'em will do them little service.

THE

The first Dialogue.

Savage and Bevil.

Bevil. **C**ome, Sir, you shall not put me off, we have time enough, and I'll know what you have to say against Mr *Collier's Defence*. If his *Short View* displeas'd you, this last Book sure will have a better fortune; it has not been publish'd above a Fortnight, and we are already threatned with a second Edition.

Sav. It may be so, and his argument not one jot the stronger. I have known an Heroick Poem bear three Impressions, and lose as much by the fourth, as it got the Booksellers by the other three; but this is little to the purpose. The Stationer often makes his advantage of the weakness of the people, yet time and good information

B

have

have at last been fatal to his Interest.

Bev. Ay, ay, you Criticks make the weakness of the people the reason that the Booksellers grow rich, and when your own, or your Friends Writings are condemn'd by the present time, you put us off to futurity. Truth, I know not why we should not judge as well as our Children.

Sav. Your Children will be impartial and bias'd by no faction; had not Mr Collier's Book been supported by a numerous Party, the fallacy of his argument had appear'd long e're this.

Bev. Prithee who has Mr Collier to support, him? and what could have rais'd him such a Character, if his Cause had not been good, and his allegations against the Stage just? You know how his misfortunes had rendred him obnoxious to the Kingdom, yet he has worn off the prejudice people had against him, by his generous undertaking, to reform our pleasures, and performing it with so much wit and judgment.

Sav. There were several men of sense that once lik'd the design and his management,

nagement, who, when they saw what he would insinuate at the bottom, the entire ruin of the Theatre, examin'd him more curiously, and were as much disgusted with his *Short View* as my self. The *Defence* can't pretend to the same reasons to please as his first Book, this was a Quarrel with Vice, and that only with those who attackt him. Whatever his first aim was, his second is, I'm sure, liable to exception; and we may speak on't the more freely, because 'tis not to vindicate the Immorality of the Stage, but the Merit of those who write for't, when they really deserve well from us.

Bev. You would be Mr---s Champion, and defend his Farces against Mr *Collier*, and all that oppose him.

Sav. No, not against all that oppose him, 'twould be difficult to find any who admire his Plays, and I am't willing to set my self in opposition to the whole World.

Bev. Then Mr *Collier* was in the right to make his remarks on him.

Sav. The world, perhaps, are in the right not to admire that Gentleman as a Comick Wit, but Mr *Collier*

B 2

shew'd

shew'd little acquaintance with the subject he treated on, when he enter'd the List with Mr ——— The Town is ready to give him up to his resentments, and will be oblig'd to him, if he will undertake what no body else thinks worth their while, to make him ashamed of his *Scriptions*.

Bed. He took Sir.

Sav. So did ——— who in time has found out what his Genius was most capable of, and confesses by his practice, that nature design'd him rather for a Taylor than a Poet.

Bev. Well, what have you to say to the *Relapser*? has not Mr *Collier* shew'd himself a nice Critick on that Author, and expos'd his Poetry more than his Morals.

Sav. He has found out indeed that his Play should not have been call'd the *Relapse*, because *Lovelace* and *Amanda* are persons of *Inferiour consideration*. He forgot sure, that this was design'd as a second part of *Loves last Shift*, where those persons are the top Characters in the Play, and perhaps he has mistaken both the Fable and the Moral. Why mayn't the Fable

ble be a continuation of that in *the Fool in Fashion*, where *Lovelace* and *Amanda* are the chief of the intrigue, and the moral be to shew, *That when persons venture too much on the sincerity of their conversion, and fly too presumptuously into temptation, they expose themselves to the danger we see Lovelace in, and their Wives to a Revenge which the strongest Virtue is only a Guard against.* This is the most reasonable, as well as favourable Examen can be made of the Fable and Moral. *Young Fashion*, 'tis true, employs a great part of the Plot, and breaks the Unity of Action, but that's all.

Bev. And enough of Conscience, grant that you allow what *Mr Collier* says.

Sav. Not at all. He has examin'd the Play according to his opinions, given a Fable and a Moral to an Action, which is only an irregular episode of one more Important, and runs out on this into several heads against the Authors Conduct, which his Friends can't think a fair way of arguing; for his Fable and Moral are not the Fable and Moral the *Relapser* design'd,

B 3 and

and consequently Mr Collier is answerable for Ignorance, or what is worse.

Bev. Are not the Unities broken?

Sav. What then, the Unities may be broken, and the Author never the worse Christian. I hope the Divine will not for his own sake make it a sin not to be a Critick. What had Mr Collier to do with the Unities, his business was with the Moral, he mistook it wilfully or ignorantly, and the sentence he passes on the *Relapse*, is of course illegal. Nor (to continue the Law Phrase) should the Readers, who are the Judges, give Judgment where there is such a flaw in the Indictment, and that much more considerable than a *Misnommer*.

Bev. I see you will never agree with the publick, nor approve any one that has not got his reputation by the assistance and recommendation of the Wits in *Convent Garden*. Had Mr Collier rail'd at their Lewdness, and let their Wit alone, his Adversaries would not have resent'd it, but their Poetry must not be touch'd. You, I perceive, are of their opinion, and can't bear that an Interloper in Criticism shou'd make such discoveries.

Sav.

Sav. They are strange ones I own, such as none but himself would have thought on; but to shew you that I am not one of that singularity of taste which you accuse me for, I agree with the multitude in some things, and yet at the same time disagree with Mr Collier.

Bev. How so?

Sav. I think Mr Congreve has a great deal more Wit, good Sense, and even Learning than the Author of the *Short View*, at least of that part of Learning which a man would desire to be master of; and that most of what he has said against him in that Book and the *Defence* is groundless and malicious.

Bev. What are there no Profaneness and Immorality in his Plays, no abuse of Quality, nor faults in Decency, no Nonsense, nor Extravagancies, which a man of Wit, good Sense and Learning ought not to have publish'd?

Sav. We have very few men of sense that have not in some measure or other been guilty of all these accusations, the humour of the Age has tempted too many of 'em to please it sometimes against their Judgments, and perhaps

Reflexions on the Stage.

their Consciences; but Mr *Congreve* has been as little culpable in this as any man. Mr *Dryden*, I hear, confesses his errors, 'twere pity to deny him that Liberty. Mr *Congreve*, on the contrary, pleads not guilty, and the world is to determine who is in the right, he or his accuser.

Bev. If you leave it to the world to judge between 'em, I know what will become of your man of Sense and Learning.

Sav. It may be you will find yourself mistaken, Mr *Collier* will not have so many Advocates for his *Defence* as he had for his *Short View*, and Mr *Congreve* has diverted the Age too much to fear they will not hear what he says for himself. His Adversary begins to make it a personal Quarrel: he's fancy'd that if he stuck close to his first Principles, he might not be able to encounter a person who had so long been the favourite of the Town. And therefore as often as it lies in his way, he has struck at the Man, his Morals, and Understanding.

Bev. Sure he has said nothing of him which he could not find in his Writings.

Sav.

Sav. He has however Insinuations and Innendo's, which might shock some credulous people, and make 'em believe Mr *Congreve* guilty of such things as he himself was afraid to name. Whatever Language he uses, I own, 'tis not *Billinggate*, yet Rogue and Rascal are less hurtful than Scurrility, colour'd as handsomely as some sort of men, artful in abuses, can paint it.

Bev. You say he has abus'd him, and accuse Mr *Collier* of abundance of errors; but where's the proof?

Sav. Here, I have his Books by me, *His Short View, and the Defence*, and if I thought it would not tire you, we would examine the last together.

Bev. No fear of that, Sir.

Sav. The Controversie, 'tis true, begins to draw towards an end, and those of both Parties, who were at first most warm for or against the Theatre begin to cool.

Bev. The Play-houses don't find it so, their Audiences lessen apace, and their Whims can hardly draw Company enough to pay their Charges.

Sav. Their Whims have done 'em more hurt than Mr *Collier's* argument.

Bev.

Reflections on the Stage.

Dev. I have been otherwise inform'd.

Sav. If you think so read the *Defence*, and I'll endeavour to convince you, that whatever you have been inform'd, 'tis impossible for a sensible man to think ill of the Stage, from what he has said or can say on the subject. Come, before 'twill be time to part, we may go a great way thro' his last Book, we'll take no notice of the first, but as we can't well avoid it. If you read it, I'll stop you where I have any thing to object.

Def. p. 2. *Dev.* Agreed. *Had these obnoxious passages lain hid in a Learned Language.*

Sav. I perceive Mr Collier's Conscience had not been troubled, had the *Smut* been in *Latin*. He supposes (and considering his *Ceremony* is very Civil to the Age) that no body then would have understood 'em but himself. He is a little too covetous of what he rails at so much. Certainly Profaneness and Obscenity are as guilty in one Language as another. But Mr Collier seems so fond of those Passages, that he would have none share in 'em but himself, could he help it.

Dev.

Bev. This is Malice, he tells you, *he* Def. p. 2.
would rather unchain the Tyger in Bar-
tholomew Fair.

Sav. Yes, and I'm oblig'd to him for
his Metaphor, and that fine expression
of *disobliging the Paper* a line or two
lower.

Bev. But since the Reader is directed
to the Evidence, he may disappoint 'em in
this evasion if he pleases.

Sav. That is, if he'll read and un-
derstand 'em as he meets with 'em, or
as Mr Collier did: *And not read a Page* P. 15.
for a Period, but to take his Liberty
and argue with a Question. Are there
not some passages which depend entire-
ly on what went before 'em, and on the
Character of the persons who spoke
'em? How can a man judge of the
thing but by the Character? and all that
ever writ have made the persons they
introduce, speak according to their
Characters. Has not *Milton* in the best
and most Religious Poem that has been
writ since our Saviours days, made his
Devil say of God Almighty ?

Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of
Heaven,

And

View p.
96.

And who, that should light on this Verse, would not think the Author guilty of horrid Blasphemy, unless he read what went before, and consider'd who spoke it. Mr Collier says, that *no pretence of Character or Punishment, could justify Profaneness on the Stage*, and by his arguments against treating some Blockheads of note like what they are, or shewing a lewd Fellow as he is ridiculous, one may be sure he meant that such Characters ought not to be expos'd. But *Pere Bossu* is quite of another Opinion, I have his Book before me, and I'll read you his own words, which you shall have translated if you can't perfectly understand 'em. He is talking of the justness of Character; 'tis true, his subject is Epick Poetry, but this part of the Chapter relates to Character in all Poetry; and he is known to have been a good Man, as well as a great Judge, and the gravest and moralest Critick, that has treated on this affair. *Ce que nous disons ici n'est pas pour Exclure du Poeme ce que La Morale Condamne, Un Poete ne doit Jamais donner de mauvais Exemples mais il y a bien de la difference entre un mauvais Exemple*



& L'Exemple d'une mauvais e action au d'une mauvaise e personne. Les Lacédémoniens ne pretendoient point donner de mauvais Exemples a Leurs enfans quand pour Les eloigner de L'Yronmerie, ils Leur mettoient devant Les Yeux, des esclaves qu'ils faisoient euzorer exprès. Il est donc permis au Poete de mettre, des Achilles, & des Mezences, comme des Ulysses, & des Enees. Il peut représenter La prodigalite, & L'avarice comme La Liberalite & La Juste économie d'un bon menager & d'un honnete Bourgeois. Mais quoi qu'il fasse. Ou pour la Vertu ou pour le Vice, ou pour quelque qualite indifferente il doit au moins Savoir ce qu'il fait, non Seulement parce qu'il lui est honteux de l'ignorer mais parce que cette connoissance Le fait agir avec beaucoup plus de justesse. Which is in English, as near as I can render it. What we have said is not to exclude every thing out of a Poem which Morality Condemns. A Poet ought not to give ill Examples; but there's a great deal of difference between an ill Example, and the Example of an ill Action or an ill Person. The Lacedemonians did not intend to give their Children ill Examples, when they set their Slaves whom they

they made drunk on purpose before their Eyes, to deter 'em from Drunkenness. A Poet is permitted to shew an *Achilles* or a *Mezentius*, as well as an *Ulysses* or an *Æneas*. He may represent Prodigality and Avarice, as Lawfully as Liberality, and the just oeconomy of a good Husband, or an honest Citizen. But whatever he does, whether for Virtue or Vice, or any other indifferent quality, he must know what he is about, not only because 'tis scandalous for him not to know it, but because this knowledge will make him manage himself with much more justice. Thus we see *Bossu* would not have been displeas'd with *Dorax's* Rant in *Don Sebastian*.

View. p.
65.

*Shall I trust Heaven
With my revenge, then where's my satisfaction?
No, it must be my own, I scorn a Proxy,*

He would have consider'd this Bully was a Renegado and a *Mezentius* in point of Principles, tho this is not so outrageous as what that Atheist says in the last Moment of his Life.

Nec

Nec mortem barrescens, nec diem per-
cimus ulli,

Nor fear I fate, but all the Gods defy.
Vir. *Eneid.* Dryd. transl.

This judicious Critick, tho a Christian and a Divine, is not so scrupulous as to throw such lines as these out of a Poem, When he knows the Character of the man that spake 'em. *Mannuel* in the *Mourning Bride* is a wicked Prince, and as Mr *Collier* says, swaggers in these Heroick lines.

Better for him to tempt the rage of
Heaven,
And wrench the Bolt red hissing from Def. p. 35.
the hand
Of him that Thunders, than but think
such Insolence,
'Tis daring for a God.

But *Bossu* wou'd have excus'd this Sally when he found him punish'd ; 'tis true, 'tis not immediately for this, but 'tis for his Crimes in general, and his Lust and Pride being two of the greatest, our Adversary ought not to have imputed

puted his punishment only to his Tyranny. There are worse passages in *Milton's Paradise lost* than any Mr Collier has quoted from the Stage Writers, yet none ever pretended to blame *Milton* for Profaneness. We may have occasion to say more on this matter hereafter. So pray read on.

P. 2.

Rev. The profane part tho bolder and more black.

Sav. Why not more bold and more black, or bolder and blacker? but this is nothing, here's a Sentence, which for its Eloquence can hardly be matcht in *Cicero*. Sometimes this profane part is a Picture, then a Criminal, then an Adversary, and then a Disease, and in the compass of five lines Mr Collier is both a Painter and a Judge, a Champion and a Physician.

P. 3.

Rev. You may understand his meaning.

Sav. It must be as the Proverb says then.

Rev. For which I have said that Fondlewife's, &c. is a fit of buffoonry.

Sav. To say this of a Character is certainly of the Author in Mr Collier's way of expressing himself. He says the

Plot

Plot and no Plot swears at length. I suppose few will question but he means the Author of the *Plot and no Plot*, in the Play he has call'd so. For who else is this *Plot and no Plot that swears* Pref. to Def. so (as our Author very assumingly affirms without ground or instance) and is so scandalously Smutty and Profane. He says he may be excus'd for breach of manners, because he speaks it of *Fondlewife*, and not the Author. Why then won't he excuse the Author's familiarity with Quality in other places, since he does not design to affront the Character, but to expose Folly and Extravagance.

Bev. But which way do I call 'em Def. p. 4. Slaves? Why, because they were free.

Sav. This is wonderful, and worthy P. 16. the arguments which follow. *Is liberty then always fastned to a Chain, and familiarity a proof of servitude.* He puns on his own words, and then reasons on his pun: A very extraordinary way of arguing.

Bev. His remaining instance from my P. 16. Preface is much like this.

Sav. His words are, *these men sure* (having nam'd the Stage Poets just
C be-

Pref. to
Short
View.

before) take virtue and regularity for great Enemies; and a little further, like Foot-pads, they must not only rob but murder. You may see now how unanswerable the remaining instance of his ill-breeding was, and consequently how just his answers were to the others, and thus make a judgment of his extreme Ceremony.

Def. p. 4. *Bev. Railing is an unchristian Talent.*

Sav. Mr Collier calls every thing that's against him railing, and bad imputations. But satisfy'd with his own sufficiency, he's not in the least disturb'd with 'em, and at once condemns 'em all as without colour or truth. The severity he has been treated with, was what his own ill Language provok'd; and he should not have blam'd such a way of answering Books, unless he had us'd another in the defence.

Def. p. 8. *Bev. But granting Mr Congreve his definition.*

Sav. Which every one is ready to allow, except our adversary, who will make Aristotle as well as our Stage Poets speak what he pleases. He affirms the
tran-

translation of *Μῆτρας γενναίας* may as properly be the common, as the worst sort of people. Mr Congreve had provided against his exception, by explaining his construction a little after from Aristotle himself, but *κατὰ τὰς καλὰς* will serve as well the other way; that is, if Aristotle, whether he will or no, shall say what Mr Collier would have him, which neither Aristotle, nor his Interpreters, nor the Criticks who have writ after him ever intended. Comedy is an Imitation of the worst sort of people, and the Vulgar being most liable to err, they are the fittest subjects for the Poet; but when Quality level themselves with the Vulgar, by being guilty of the same Vices, they expose themselves to the same Satyr. Comedy meddles not with Persons of the degree of Marquisses, while they maintain their native Dignity, but when they fall from it, and stoop to the weaknesses of the multitude, she thinks they are lawful Prize, and may freely make use of 'em. This Mr Collier very generously allows: For, he says, granting Mr Congreve's definition, Covetousness, Profusion, Spleen, Singularity, well

Def. p. 7.

Def. p.

p. 8.

manag'd might possibly do; forgetting that he has all along aim'd at the destruction of the Stage in general, and proving by I know not what sense of Antiquity that it ought not to be suffer'd under any regulation. Thus we see Mr Congreve's first postulate is far from being false in the Generality stated by him.

P. 9.

Bev. I never thought you would defend Mr Congreve's Postulata.

Sav. He desir'd those who wou'd not allow 'em to forbear reading his Amendments, they were laid down with such caution, and us'd so seldom, that 'thad been barbarous to deny him so small a request, which indeed was but Justice. His adversary has shewn that you shall get nothing of him without hard blows. Well, let's go on with him.

P. 9.

Bev. I can't but take notice of his saying that the business of Comedy is to Delight as well as to Instruct; if he means as much by as well he is mistaken.

Sav. How if he does not mean as much by as well who is mistaken then? I doubt a Gentleman in whom 'tis no new thing to mistake. Mr Congreve says a little after, that ill men are to be laugh'd

laugh'd out of their Vices, that others might be at once warn'd and diverted at Amend. p. their expence. He puts the Instruction ^{8.} first, and when he says, fools are to be laugh'd at, 'tis to make 'em asham'd of their faults. The reproof is the end. However, all sorts of Poetry ought to please, as Horace tells us,

Et prodesse Volunt & delectare Poetæ,

And again,

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.
Hor.

If so, certainly Comedy ought, which is to ridicule people out of their errors and follies. A great modern Critick Rapin Reflex. sur le Poet. has told us, that Poetry is agreeable only to render it useful, and that Comedy, which is an Image of Vulgar Conversation, corrects the publick errors by shewing the ridiculousness of private. The same Author adds, that since Poetry is so much the more useful, by how much the more 'tis agreeable, the business of this art is to please, *l'importance de cette art est de plaire,*

plaire. And in his *Reflexions sur l'Eloquence*, speaking of the difference between the Pulpit and the Theatre, he says, *La Chaire ne doit pas estre comme le Theatre ou l'un ne va que pour le plaisir.* The Pulpit ought not to be like the Stage, where men go only for their pleasure. Racine in his Preface to the Tragedy of *Berenice* tells us, that to please is the principal rule, *la principale regle est de plaire*; and if 'tis so in Tragical, 'tis much more so in Comical representations. That the end of Comedy is to please, none will dispute that know any thing of this matter. Some have thought Pleasure its chief design, these, tho the greater number, are to be sure in the wrong, as much as those who fancy Pleasure little requisite towards rendring it useful. No Comedy can be profitable that is not pleasant: What reason then had Mr Collier to Insult on Mr Congreve's meaning *as much by as well*, had he desir'd to be understood, so, which 'tis plain he did not. And who but one who was resolv'd on any terms to make him in the wrong, cou'd have mistaken him here? however, he triumphs on his Success,
and

and very arrogantly assures us, Mr Congreve's first rule signifies little. We have seen the contrary, and his second then does not fall of course. 'Twould be indeed hard if you should think a Poet a Fool or a Cuckold because there's a Fop or a Jilt in his Play. If the Poet draws his own Picture, he is always so favourable to himself, as to throw his likeness into the draught of the fine Gentleman: What he says he ought to be accountable for, there he does his best, and if he errs 'tis an error in the Character. What the Coxcombs and Scoundrels are guilty of, let their Originals answer for, and take care to give no more occasion for such offence. Mr Collier is very well read in Mr Dryden's Prefaces, and one would think should have been kinder to the man from whom he learnt the best part of his Criticisms.

Rev. Mr Congreve's fourth Postula-Def. p. 11:
tum.

Sav. Hold, what says he to the third, that relates particularly to himself?

Rev. Nothing, I suppose, he thought^{P. 5.}
it below him; he had said before, all

Reflections on the Stage.

he shall say is, he pities the men, and despises their malice.

Sav. Very Philosophical ! However, you'll find him I believe hereafter, and as little to the purpose as if he had finish'd here.

Bev. You can't allow of the fourth *Postulatum*.

Sav. I think that is most exceptionable. Scripture phrases ought not to be us'd in ridiculous things ; and perhaps this is the greatest fault our Comick Writers have been guilty of. 'Twou'd be easie to amend these errours, and very hard to starve two or three hundred Families, because *Jehu* is call'd a Hackney Coachman.

P. 14.

Bev. And put him under the circumstances of Contempt. I shall now go back to his third.

Sav. To be put under the circumstances of Contempt is a very happy expression, and I believe copy'd from *Crack* in *Sir Courtley Nice*, who says he is under the circumstances of a sweat, and under several other such circumstances. The remarks we made on his answer to the third proposition, will serve as a reply to this.

Bev.

Rev. I remember you said something more satisfactory a little before, when he directed his Reader to the Evidence. 16. 17. Well, here are Pages for you, can you urge any thing against these.

Sav. Mr *Collier* thunders against the Licentiousness of the Stage in his way, but his Pathetick is only tautology, the same thing over and over in short Sentences. 'Tis his manner when he is, or fancies he is in the right, he uses his Adversaries unmercifully, and like Cowards at an advantage, beats 'em on the Ground.

Rev. I have done with Mr *Congreve's* Preliminaries, and shewn the unreasonableness of 'em. If he demands 'em as a right, his Title is defeated. If he begs 'em as a favour, he should have petitioned another way. P. 18.

Sav. Very pithy and modest.

Rev. 1. This Expedient is not always made use of. P. 19.

Sav. A thousand and Instances could be given to the contrary; and there is scarce a Play whose end is not moral and instructive, let there be never so many errors in the Poem.

Rev.

Bev. adly, *These comprehensiv lines
do more harm than good.*

Sav. That is sometimes. This expedient is not always made use of, he divides well, and without doubt has study'd Dr Eachard's Contempt of the Clergy with application.

Bev. But here's an instance of an uncourtly and vitious ending in the Old Batchelour, which, according to Mr Collier encourages lewdness.

Sav. As much as that in *Love for Love.*

*The miracle to day is that we find,
A Lover true, not that a Woman's kind.*

Bev. *This last word is somewhat ambiguous, and with a little help may strike off into a light sense, &c.*

Sav. We have to do with a Gentleman who is very charitable on these occasions, and can help a man out at a dead lift, as well as any one. Who, without Mr Collier's assistance, would have taken *Not that a Woman's kind* for Bawdy? Yet he is not satisfy'd with his charge, but accuses the Verses for want of weight and apothegm? when he has struck 'em off into another sense, I question

stion not but they would be more weighty.

Bev. A Ballad is more licentious.

Bev. If by sententious he means sentences, he has made a very merry reflexion; for we have no less than three important sentences in this Paragraph, extreamly full of Apothegm; here you have another taste of his Eloquence.

Bev. When a Poet has flourish'd on an ill subject, larded his Scenes with Smutt, play'd his jests on Religion, exhausted himself upon Vice.

Sav. A fine parcel of Metaphors.

Bev. Pray let me go on, don't interrupt me before you have heard the whole period. *What can a dry line of good Council do.*

Sav. You may discover what a relish he has of good Council, by the epithet he puts to it, a dry line or two wou'd stick in his Throat, and nothing be so easily swallow'd as what went before it.

Bev. Pure spite, o' my Conscience.

P. 22.

Thus when the greatest part of Quality are debauch't on the Stage, 'tis a broad Inuenda they are no better in the Boxes.

Sav.

Sav. I protest against his *Inuendo's*, I mistrust his Conscience would be quiet enough, if a man in a much higher case was condemn'd by an *Inuendo*; but such things are not legal now a-days, and no man, as Mr *Collier* himself can witness, suffers without proof.

Bev. I answer, the case is not parallel.

P. 11.

Sav. You shall judge of that, he says, in his *Short View*. There are but four Ladies in this Play, and three of the biggest of them are Whores. A great compliment on Quality, to tell 'em there is not above a quarter of 'em honest. Mr *Collier*, by the way, has taken care to engage the people of Condition to appear on his side, by pretending to procure 'em a privilege from Satyr. The Aldermen and Country Justices are by-afs'd by the Inclosures he has made for those inferiour Magistrates, as if 'twas any affront to my Lord Mayor or Court of Aldermen to shew one of their Brethren may be a Miser, or an abuse of Magistracy to think a Justice of Peace a Blockhead; those who have any converse with the Country know such things are very much in nature, and ~~there~~ there are but too many instances of

P. 12.

of the other in the City. Our Adversary has secur'd the Clergy to himself by blazoning their Scutcheons. The marry'd people, by railing at the affronting ~~the~~ Matrimony, and the unmarried by telling the world that Love is a paltry passion.

Bev. You forget the Parallel you promis'd me.

Sav. If three of Mr *Cognewe's* Ladies out of four are Strumpets, and Mr *Collier* makes this observation immediately, *A great Complement on Quality, to P. 11.* tell them there is not above a quarter of them honest: is it not the same as it four women were shewn upon the Stage, and three of 'em were vicious, that thence we must conclude three parts in four of the whole Sex stark naught. What he says in excuse, *that the representation in the Double Dealer turns more on Condition than Sex* is false. Neither is it the Quality which makes the appearance. The sentiments in all cases mark the Character, and point out to the Comparison in manners. If a man speaks or acts like my self, and he's reprov'd for't, let his Quality be what it will, I should think my self concern'd.

Bev.

Bev. You are in the right thus far ; but how will you excuse Mr *Congreve* for saying, *Women do more harm than good ?*

Sav. Mr *Collier* says that Mr *Congreve* quotes it from *Aristotle*, and Mr *Congreve* owns the same : adding the authority of *Bossu* after him ; and sure he will not blame that Gentleman for following two such Criticks.

Bev. His precedents from *Virgil* are unserviceable upon two accounts. 1st, The fact is misreported.

Sav. We shall now have another opportunity to make a Judgment of his Modesty and Learning. He says the fact is misreported. But who is it that happens to be so little acquainted with *Virgil* ? Why no less than the famous *Bossu*, that has been allow'd by universal consent to understand him the best of any Critick that ever writ on him ; and he gives more Examples than Mr *Congreve* has quoted from *Virgil*, to shew how much oftner you find the women in the *Eneids* under ill Characters than good ones. However, Mr *Collier* tells us, *Creusa* and *Lavinia* are perfectly passive, Anna a very innocent Prin-

Princess, yet she is in the Cabal with her Sister *Dido*, the Nurse and the Witch, who contrive the destruction of *Aeneas* and his *Trojans*; besides a great many other qualities which would render her innocence suspected to any one else. Then as for *Camilla*, why is she thrown into the black Pit? For the same reason as *Cressa* and *Lavinia*, and that is because they all occasion'd a great many misfortunes to the Hero. *Camilla* particularly bore arms against him, and there might be more said for the throwing her into the List than the other two. *Bossu* informs us, *Virgil* design'd to shew the Sex that War is not their Trade, and to expose the Levity of Women when he brought her into the field; adding a little farther, that this Levity made her forget her Dignity, the care of her person, and was follow'd by several accidents of ill consequence; and tho, as Mr *Collier* affirms, she stood firmly by *Latinus*, yet her engaging in an ill cause, in opposition to so pious a Hero as *Aeneas* was ground enough for making her keep company with the rest in that black List; if we will believe *Virgil* and
Bossu

Bossu before our resolute Adversary, who assures us so daringly that the fact is misreported. He is very fond of telling of Noses, and proving *Pere Bossu* in the wrong, for saying *Virgil* had but too exactly follow'd *Aristotle's* thoughts in his Poesy; that there are more bad women than good, and that they do less good than harm. But if he goes to polling, he'll perceive he had no occasion for his *first and second* account, how Mr *Congreve's* precedents from *Virgil* are unserviceable.

24-

Bev. Mr *Congreve* countenances an Author in his misbehaviour.

Sav. Speaking of *Aristotle* and *Bossu* very familiarly.

24-

Bev. And makes his court thus awkwardly to the Ladies.

Sav. Mr *Collier* is not always to be taken at his word; we have Mr *Congreve's* Amendments by us, pray let's see how he countenances 'em. He says, *In an Epick Poem Ladies of Quality may be us'd as Aristotle pleases, but Comedy was meant to complement, and tickle, and flatter, and all that.* Is this countenancing the Philosophers.

Amend p.
27.

Bev.

Bev. No, the quite contrary : 'Tis strange Mr *Collier* should misunderstand him.

Sav. I think 'twou'd be stranger if he should not, for he'll understand nothing which is not for his purpose ; are not his dapper Sentences against Mr *Congreve's* breeding very fair dealing, and must not this be a very Honest Man, as well as a Just Critick.

Bev. The Satyr of a Comedian and another Poet have a different effect upon reputation. P. 25.

Sav. By the Satyr of a Comedian he means the Satyr of a Comick Poet has a different effect upon reputation. Yes, and because it has so, Comedy is much more useful for Satyr than any other kind of Poetry. If 'twas allowable in *Juvenal* and *Persius* to expose men of Quality, 'twas in order to correct their follies, and reform the Age. Now since (as Mr *Collier* owns, in twenty sentences one after another, to express the same thing) the Eye is much more affecting than the Ear, that certainly is the most commendable and profitable Satyr which obtains its end soonest. All Satyr is Abuse which does

D not

not design Instruction ; what touches a mans reputation nearest is most likely to amend him ; and sure one ought not to be afraid of Instructing a fool, for fear the world should have an ill opinion of his understanding. The Ancients made so little account of this, that they did not stick at shewing their Actors in Masks, representing the Persons they brought on the Stage, and calling 'em by their names. This would be outrageous in our times ; our Comick Poets have always disguis'd the Originals of their Copies so much, as was necessary to make 'em see their defects, and not be disgusted with the Picture, because too singular. Their Characters, whoever gave occasion for 'em, have always been general, and if a Fop has been stil'd a Lord, every body knows that the Author did not make him a Fop because he was a Lord, but made him a Lord, to shew a man may have a Title and not deserve it. The *French* have done the same, so have the *Italians* and *Spaniards*, who understand Punctilio better than Mr Collier. *Racine* brings a Countess on the Stage in his *Playdeurs*. 'Tis a character much like

like Widow Blackacre's, and I think he ridicules her enough, when he makes her answer to a Gentleman who askt if her Law Suits were over.

*Monsieur tous mes proces alloient estre
finis*

*Il ne m'en restoit plus que quatre ou
cinq petits*

*L'un contre mon maris l'autre contre
mon pere*

Et contre mes Enfans.

They are near being all concluded, and I have only four or five little ones depending, one against my Husband, another against my Father, a third against my Children, &c. Racine has not treated her Ladyship very ceremoniously, and whatever a Marquis is, sure a Count, and consequently a Countess, is as high a Quality as our Baron.

*Bev. His testimony from Rapin does p. 27.
not come up to the French.*

*Sav. Whatever he says of Rapin or
the French Authors, will have very lit-
tle weight with me, I am pretty well
convinc'd he knows little of their Plays
or their Language, or he would not*

C 2

have

have printed such blunders as you will find in what he says on the word *Marquis*.

P. 27.

Bev. Now notwithstanding Mr Dennis's Exclamation, a *Marquis* in France is much less than a *Marquis* in England, or *Baron* either.

Sav. Here again, this Gentleman's modesty and reading may be call'd in question, because he is so positive, you will excuse me if I am the more particular in vindicating what I say. I took some pains with him in this matter, and some days since put my thoughts in writing. I'll read it to you, and so we'll defer considering him any farther till we meet next.

Bev. I shall not have patience to stay longer than till to morrow, and since you have your Books about you, we'll meet in the same place, and I'll give you a new trouble.

Sav. I will not think it any, especially if I can satisfy you that Mr *Collier* is not what he pretends to be, nor his arguments what some good men have taken 'em for.

Bev. I want to know what you have said about his *French Marquis*, for he seems

seems very sure of his being in the right.

Sav. He is always so, and generally as much out as he is now. To excuse himself for his error of making a *Marquis* in *France*, a Quality much less than a *Marquis* or *Baron* in *England*, he tells you, 'tis pretty plain from *Moliere* himself, who in his *l'Impromptu de Veefailles*, makes *Brecount* say to a *Marquis*, *Mon pauvre Marquis Je te promet Marquis*, which way of speaking *Mr Collier* affirms is not manners unless in *Equals* or *Inferiours*. Now every one that reads that Play, will find he's us'd with such familiarity, to shew the freedoms his *Foppery* expos'd him to. *Moliere* made him a *Coxcomb* before he allow'd the Character to be treated so uncivilly; and who thinks himself oblig'd to be nice with a *Fop*. He knew very well how far a man of his quality might be dealt with so freely, without breaking in on decency. This, I suppose, will not be disputed. Then for his Authority, to prove the quality of a *French Marquis* below our *Marquisses* or *Barons*, he says *Dorante* in another Play treats one of'em with terms of Equality,

quality, and *Climene* calls him *Monsieur Dorante*, is made a Gentleman of good sense, and the Marquis, like the generality of his quality, one of an affected taste in Poetry, who thinks Wit and a Title inseparable, but suffer'd himself to be impos'd on, by persons that Criticiz'd on every thing without Candour or Judgment. No wonder then that he uses him as his Equal, in a dispute where he knew Self his superiour, and saw the *Marquis* led away by Fools; and sure every man of Wit that is a Gentleman, would be as free in *England* on the same occasion. The *French* give the stile of *Monseigneur* to none below a Duke, unless his Post otherwise demands it. This is frequently seen in *Balzac* and *Voiture*. *Balzac* writing to the Marquis of *Mont^{au}nasier* stiles him *Monsieur*, but after his advancement to the Government of *Alsace*, his address is *Monseigneur*. Mr *St Evremont* in a Letter to the Duke of *Buckingham*, Supercribes only a *Monsieur de Boquingam*, though the *French* stile all their Bishops *Monseigneur*; and 'twas not to make a particular Compliment to the Bishop of *London*, that they call him
My

My Lord, for 'tis no more than they do by all their Prelates, as well as his belov'd Bishop of Arras, which any one may find in *Voiture* or *Balzac*. However, 'twere easie to prove him in an error, from the *French Academies*, or *Richelet's Dictionary*; *Richelet* says on the word *Marquis*.

That formerly this word was taken for a Captain of some Frontier Garrison.

But lately 'tis a Lord, who takes place next Princes and Dukes.

Besides, what *Rapin's* sense of *Molier's* meaning was, is agreeable to ours; for *Rapin*, says the Poets, formerly brought only Servants on the Theatre for their Buffoons. But *Molier's* are *Marquisses* and men of Condition. They only expos'd the manners of Citizens and Common people. *Moliere* all Paris and the Court. Mr *Collier* very wisely remarks, that *Rapin* did not say *toute la Cour*, all the Court, neither did *Moliere* ever pretend to expose 'em all, tho he spar'd none of 'em as they came in his way. *Rapin* opposes all Paris and the common people

P. 19.

ple to the Court and Gentry, and not, as Mr *Collier* says, the Country Conversation to the Court: For no body but our Adversary would have understood *Un Bourgeois*, for a Country-man, nor *Lavie Bourgeoise*, for Country Conversation. But the Citizens who live nearest the Court, were like our own, apt to make awkward imitations of their politeness, which the Poets us'd then only to ridicule. But *Moliere* took his Fools where-ever he found 'em, either in Court or City, which are commonly oppos'd to one another. Mr *Collier* concludes, *that if after all Rapin has given Moliere more liberty than he took*, 'tis well he modestly said if he has done so; for none that have read either one or the other, can charge him with making *Moliere* speak what he never intended, which is more than we can say in this case, for the Gentleman who has so grossly mistaken him.

P. 29.

Bew. Good night, Sir, Mr *Collier* I find is not always infallible.

Sav. Adieu till to morrow.

The end of the first Dialogue.

The

The Second Dialogue.

Savage, Bevill.

Sav. I See you are a man of your word, and punctual to your appointment.

Bev. I should indeed be to blame if I broke an assignation of this nature; had it been only to drink a Bottle, I might have had as bad a memory as the rest of our good Fellows.

Sav. Have you thought of our last Conference, does Mr *Collier* win or lose in your opinion?

Bev. If so many excellent persons had not declar'd for him, I should think worse of him than I do, but 'tis hard to oppose ones self to the general sentiments of mankind.

Sav. You are afraid to be thought singular, and have not courage enough to own a good cause when it suffers under the censures of a majority,

Bev.

Bev. However, if you come off this time as well as you did yesterday, I shall be emboldned by my conviction to think as I please, and not be prejudic'd by the partiality of the publick.

Sav. You will get something by the Dispute, if it breaks you of your easiness in that point, and makes you see with other Eyes than those of the multitude; or if you will learn from your favour to Mr *Collier*, not to be kinder to a man than he deserves from you, because his reputation is general, and fame has done too much for him.

Bev. We left off at the 30th page of the *Defence*, if you please I'll read on.

Sav. With all my heart, I have gone once more thro the whole Book since I saw you, but in hopes of satisfying your scruples I'll endure the hearing on't again.

Bev. That must be a great condescension to one who has so little an opinion of the Author.

Sav. I should be ready to do Justice to his merit, if he had not been so over favourable to himself, that he has left no room for moderate praise, and

and I think more is not his due.

Bev. Well, let's try that by his writing. *I can't think it any excellence of good manners, to expose the Nobility in their Robes.*

Bev. And when did he ever see a Nobleman brought on in the Figure he makes in the House of Peers. 'Tis the Lord in the Chocolate House, of a Visit where he acts the part of a private man, unless that he distinguishes himself from the rest by his affectation and folly. Mr *Collier* stretches every thing beyond the measure the Poets give it, and uses his old way of confuting those he opposes, makes 'em mean what they never design'd, and then lashes them for their meaning. I have given you other examples of this trick of his before, and demonstrated, I suppose, pretty plain, that if a Lord and a Fool grow together, he must be shewn as a Monster; and the rather, since his Quality makes the figure the more ridiculous.

Bev. *I had nothing to do with his Verses.*

Sav. Pray let's see what these Verses are he has nothing to do with.

Let

Let secret villany from hence be warn'd,
 Howe're in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,
 Torture and shame attend their open birth:
 Like Vipers in the womb base treachery
 lyes,
 Still gnawing that whence first it did arise,
 No sooner born but the vile Parent dyes.

No, no, Mr Collier has nothing to do with such Verses as these. These are very Moral, and conclude a Play, and what is more a Play, which he has blacken'd as much as possible; he has nothing to do with the good things in our Comick writers, he did not go to the Playhouse to hear any thing but *smut*, and as Informers frequented Conventicles, only to impeach 'em, his ears were shut to such Lines as these, but he listned with attention to what was naught.

Bev. And that I still say is foul in the Image.

Sav. We know Mr Collier too well to expect he should recant his errors.

Bev. What says this Lord Touchwood, which is still censur'd as foul in Image,
 em-

embarrass with trifling Epithets, and ill suited to the Character.

Sav. We'll see the Amendments. Oh, 'tis Lord Touchwood's Hail to the Bridegroom. The Bridal night is a time, when the nicest Tongues speak with less caution, than at other times, and Mr Collier had said before, that Lord Touchwood was a Pedantical Character; *Be each others comfort, let me join your hands, unwearied nights and wishing days attend you both, mutual Love, lasting Health, and circling Joys, tread round each happy Year of your long Lives.* The Phrase is Poetical, and consequently suited to the Character of a starcht Coxcomb pretending to Politeness, and I fancy Mr Collier would have wisht 'em Joy in some such Language; but where's the *Smut*? where are the trifling Epithets? is any thing trifling which marks the Character the better, or is it not natural for a man to be in P. 30. some transport on those occasions. With our Adversary's help, this might be struck off into Bawdy, but as spiteful as he is, 'tis not in his power to make it Nonsense. 'Tis very humorous to hear him talk of trifling Epithets, and em-

embarrass'd Characters, when his Language is so full of the one, and his Sentiments of the other. Which puts me in mind of the Whores Exclamation, Lord, to see the impudence of some women.

P: 31.

Bev. If it be so, I think the Play was not worth the Candle.

Sav. Nobly exprest: he has a great faculty at translating Proverbs. You may see how this Gentleman spends his time at the Theatre, when there is no Smut or Profaneness in the way, 'tis doubtless in gaping on the Sconces. Mr Congreve said in his *Amendments*, If there be Immodesty in this Play, I must confess my self incapable of writing any thing with Modesty. It may be so, says Mr Collier, an ill custom is very hard to conquer with some people. Here he exerts himself, and shews that he's the very abstract of civility. But he forgot that Mr Congreve had said the same thing to her Royal Highness the Princess in his Dedication. To convince your R.H. that a Play may be with industry so compos'd (in spite of the licentious practice of the modern Theatre) as to become sometime an innocent and not unprofitable entertainment.

This

This was said in another presence than Mr Collier's, and the honour her R. H. shew'd this Play afterwards, is a very good reproof to his insolence : Let any one read the Page he quotes from the *Mourning Bride*, and then examine our adversary. Is not the fury of a disappointed Lover, that on the morrow expects to hear his Rival has his Mistress in his arms. Is not this enough to transport him to madness ?

Bev. Was it worth his while to be thus Crazy ?

Sav. This is not the first time Mr Collier has shewn his spite to Love, his Books demonstrate he has been ever a stranger to that passion in any of its branches: and no wonder if what *Of-min* says is Jargon to him. Who can see that Scene, and not be toucht with it ? Which few men of sense are with the mad Scenes of *Lee* and his Imitators, that, to use Mr Collier's words, smell rank of *Bedlam*.

Bev. O my Almeria !

*What do the damn'd endure but to despair,
And knowing heaven, to know it lost for
ever.*

Sav.

Sec. Lovers in these cases are always allow'd to talk extravagantly ; our devout Poets have aim'd at it in their writings, and if they have not said things as wild as this, 'twas because they could not. Mr Norris in a paper of Verses on some parting Lovers says,

Eden is lost, the rest's but common ground.

And a little after,

I envy'd none below, scarce those above.

Which I think as inexcusable, as what Bellmour says in the Old Batchelour,

Could you be content to go to Heaven.
B. *Hum——not immediately, &c.*

Norris Msc.

*But ah Hypocrisies no where so common
grown,
As in most sacred things, Love and
Religion,*

You may be sure I don't remember these Couplets for their Poetry, only to shew that

some Reverend Authors have had other thoughts of Love than Mr Collier, and not been so over careful how they compar'd it to Sacred things, as he is.

*Bev. Thus the little success of Love P. 34.
are equall'd with the Glories of Heaven,
and a Paltry Passion.*

Sav. Is not the comparing of a Lover's parting with his Mistress, to our first Parents losing Paradice, every whit as extraordinary. Here you have another fling at Love: I'm afraid if the Adversary ever felt it, he was not us'd very tenderly; for whatever the matter is, he can by no means give it a good word.

*Bev. Better for him to tempt the rage
of Heaven.* Mourn. Bride.

Sav. The Poets all along in these places, have allusion to the Pagan Theology; and tho the Scene lies in Christendom, yet the Cant distinguishes what Divinity they mean to *wrench the bolt red hissing,* &c. would be Nonsense if 'twas said of any other Deity than *Vulcan* and *Jupiter*. Yet Mr *Cowly* whose story is Copy'd from the Bible, in his *Dauid* talks worse, *Cowly* who has been so much admir'd by those who do, and those
E who

who do not understand him, for his modesty and virtue.

David's
1st Book.

Nay their God too—far fear he did.

And again, he makes Envy say a little below this,

'Tis not thy God himself shall save thee,
Boy.

Bev. I come now to the vindication of the Poetry.

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Sav. And here he complains that there's no antithesis in *wasting air*, I ever thought Mr Collier fond of that figure. 'Twas easie to be discover'd by his manner of writing: *La Bruyere* has told us what sort of men make use on't, which suits exactly with the maturity of his Genius. *Les jeunes gens sont eblois de l'ec lat de l'antithese & s'en servent.* Young men are dazzled with the lustre of an antithesis, and are fond of using it.

375

Bev. Besides, the word is almost worn out.

Sav. This is not only false but unreasonable; we can't put a better in its

its place, and there's not a polite writer, who has not us'd it when 'twas proper, as 'tis certainly here to express something wonderfully soft.

Bev. Commenting on his own blunder. 37.

Sav. A thing Mr Collier practices perpetually, page the 9th, 24th, and 17th, and almost every page in his Book.

Bev. On this occasion a little singularity in the Expression was not unseasonable. 35.

Sav. 'Tis always unseasonable to be nasty.

This Litter of Epithetes makes the Poem look like a Bitch over-stockt with Puppies, and sucks the sense almost to skin and bone,

is indeed a singular expression, but Mr Collier is very particular in every thing that relates to decency.

Bev. The Epithetes likewise must be smooth.

Sav. He is a great master of Stile, and has a fine ear to judge of the cadency of Periods; in the next page you find in 30 lines 9 Questions and 17 Sentences, which you know is Ciceronian. Such a sort of Rhetorick be-

comes the Pulpit well enough for an ordinary Auditory; and I believe by his dwelling on things so long, in many places, he forgot he was not near his Cushion.

Bev. This was a shrewd Question, but Questions are easily started.

Sav. So it seems, when we have 9 or 10 in the same paragraph, which ends with that fine piece of railery.

Bev. That I have quoted him falsely, I deny, his immodesty forc'd me upon this method; he is often too offensive to appear; to have shewn him to the Reader had neither been civil nor safe.

Sav. Ay, pray read this again, for his breeding and good nature triumph here.

Bev. Why then does he find fault with his reservedness? Is he sorry his indecencies are conceal'd, and grown proud of his misbehaviour?

Sav. Here's manners with a witness, such lines as these must be writ in a scurvy place; he might have Candle, but I believe the Room was not extremely illuminated, the Paper would else have appear'd too much blotted. If he has not quoted him falsely, he has

mis-

misrepresented him, which is every jot as bad, in Lord Touchwood's case, and Angelica's, there's neither Smut in the one, nor Smut nor any thing out of the Character in the other, which he charges him with, and then exclaims against him. We shall have opportunity to prove more such unfair dealing on him, before we have done with the *Defence*.

Bev. He would do a little more good ⁴².
first, i. e. —

Sav. Away with that i. e. I beseech you, we'll have none of Mr Collier's Interpretations, who knows but *Belmour* might mean he would live and grow better, this is nearest the Original, and if our Adversary had not come in with his helps, it might not have been hit off into Profaneness. Mr Congreve owns the expression light, 'tis so in Mr Collier's mouth, and *Belmour* certainly design'd that some should take it one way, and others another. We know then which way Mr Collier's kindness to the Author will understand it, and shall say no more on this.

Bev. What his disease was, I am not to inquire, but it must be a very ill one.

42.

Sav. He might have put in his significant P—— and sav'd himself the trouble of so delicate a turn. 'Twou'd have been more natural in him: one can see he bit his lips, and long'd to be plain in the matter. Here's a proof of his decency, for which Mr *Congreve* and his Friends ought to own a great obligation to him.

44.

Bev. I reply in the first place, that my disproof of his second Postulatum cuts off his retreat to this excuse.

Sav. What he said to it was, that it must fall fall of course. If Comedy is to correct Vice, it must expose it, and how can a vicious man be expos'd but by his words or actions: now to make him act his wickedness, would be to restore the Infamy of the *Pantomimes*, and the Poets have no other way of discovering him, but to make him talk loosely, suitable to his Character. A man must not be punish'd on the Stage for nothing. A lewd Fellow must act his part as far as decency will permit, that he may suffer for't in the end, and as long as he keeps to nature with this restriction, the Poet can't err. Perhaps Mr *Collier* would confine the Stage to
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shew nothing but Foppery, I question if so much good would be done then, as there might be by exposing Vice. A Fop is harder to be reform'd than a Rake. He thinks his affectation a peculiar Talent given him by Heaven, and values himself on his singularity, while a Scoundrel blushes at his own Picture, and consequently is the likelier to be converted.

Bev. adly, she is not discover'd in her lewdness. 44.

Sav. She is not discover'd in a posture that would convict her in a Court of Justice at least, that would once have convicted her. Mr *Collier* I see would have been so much a Gentleman, as to have taken no notice on't, had the thing gone so far.

Bev. She makes no dishonourable Exit. 44.

Sav. I don't know what notion he has of honour. She was in a fair way of being found out by her Husband, and if she comes on no more, 'twas because she thought she had gone too far already, and was asham'd to appear, and any one but Mr *Collier* would have thought this Exit very dishonourable.

47.

Bev. No ill in't, that's strange.*Sav.* We ought to take the Gentleman's word for his own meaning, he says he meant no ill by the Allegory, and if so, the freedom is the more excusable; however, allusions to Scripture may be better avoided.*J Barch.*

48.

Bev. And Adam sure would with more ease abide*The Bone when broken, than when made a Bride.**Sav.* Mr Collier says this is an admirable comment on the Old and New Testament, but at the same time owns it copy'd from *Absalom and Achitophel*; if so, let those answer for't, who invented it.*Bev.* I'll tell him for once.*Sav.* If 'tis any thing material, I'm sure 'tis the first time, and I fear will be the last, pray let's have it; why might not *Jehu* have that as well as any other Jewish or Christian Name?*Bev.* He says he'll tell you, if you'll have patience to hear him. *'Twas never the Custom of Jews or Christians to take any Scripture names from exceptionable Persons.**Sav.*

Sav. We very seldom hear of a name twice in the Old Testament, whether exceptionable or not, and if the thing requir'd it, I suppose 'twould not be difficult to prove him in an error here too; 'tis a trifle, and we shall say more to him about his *Jehu* by and by.

Bev. No man I believe ever heard of more than two *Jehu's*.

Sav. That's strange indeed, I know a very honest Gentleman, who I'm satisfy'd will not be asham'd of writing his name, because *Jehu* in the Text was a Charioteer. If he gives himself the trouble of riding to *Colebrook*, he may be better inform'd of this matter, and I know no more reason why *Jehu* the Hackny Coachman should relate to *Jehu* the Charioteer, than *Jeremy* the Parson to *Jeremiah* the Prophet. This dispute is very whimsical, and what is not common, Mr *Collier* himself is at last asham'd on't?

Bev. *Inspiration without Epithete is P. 50.*
always taken in a religious sense.

Sav. Not always, 'tis us'd frequently in a Poetical sense, and that on subjects not very Christian, supposing an impulse from a Deity, which Christians
know

know nothing of. However we'll not fall out with him about a word: Let him have the honour of detecting something of this nature, to put that facetious story of the Lady in the Wheelbarrow in Countenance.

Bev. The little word *Still* is left out in the Quotation. I grant I have by chance omitted the word *Still*.

Sav. Perhaps not by chance.

P. 52.

Bev. And if he had done so too the sense had been perfectly the same, only better express'd.

Sav. I confess Expression is his talent. Let us try if the Sentence can stand by it self without the little word *Still*.

The Marriage makes man and Wife one
Flesh, yet it leaves 'em *Still* two Fools.

Mr Collier shou'd by Chance have omitted quoting the sentence at all, before he had so presumptuously said the sense had been the same, only better express'd: does not this imply with the *Still*.

That if two Fools join themselves together in Wedlock, there are small hopes of their growing wiser by it.

And

And without the *Still*.

That the two persons are made one Flesh P. 52
by marriage, yet they are made two Fools
for it.

*Bev. That's only when two Fools meet,
which is exactly Mr Congreve in his
Amendments.*

*Sav. And the exact meaning of the
words, they'll bear no other, unless poor
Still is taken away from 'em. Mr Col-
lier has read those worthy Gentlemens
delicate railery in their Animadversions
on this Still, and to shew you that he
is good Company, when he meets with
men to his mind, he laughs as loud as
they, and joyns in with their plentiful
mirth. Such conversation may be proper
for him, when he is writing against
the Theatre, but I am not so much
his Enemy, as to wish him no better
always.*

Bev. One wou'd think by his writings P. 57
*he had digested ill Language into a com-
mon place.*

*Sav. I believe our adversary has so
good a memory for such things that he
needs no helps to it, the dispute is
about*

about *Whoreson* appetites, in which he thunders out against Prophanes. I don't know what signification *Whoreson* has with appetites. Mr *Congreve* put the words into the mouth of a Footman, and the sense of 'em is more exceptionable than their Blasphemy. The fellow intended to give his wicked Lusts an ill name; and the Author let him hit on that first; but take it as he pleases, a man sure is not oblig'd to Compliment his Lusts with fine Epithetes, if he does otherwise I can't understand how 'tis to Blaspheme the Creation.

Bev. Well, what say you now to his charge about *Solomon*.

Sav. You know I have protested as well as he against using Phrases which might be thought to be borrow'd from the Bible, whether with or without design, but this is a fault which our Poets would have been cautious of, if Mr *Collier* had not urg'd it against them, the best of 'em had resolv'd not to please their audiences at the Expence of their Testament.

P. 63. Bev. A shrew'd contrivance to put a man out of his wits for Variety.

Sav.

Sav. If he knew any thing of contrivance, he would not have ridicul'd this. *Valentine* thought this trick would have assisted him in getting his Mistress and imposing on a cruel Ignorant Father. While he was acting the part of a Lunatic, he might say those truths which he could not have said so handsomely in his perfect senses. The variation of the Character had a very pleasant effect, and if the Adversary is his friend, he will not hereafter condemn a man for not being always ty'd up to sense, and confin'd to his understanding.

Bev. By your own confession you must be against *Valentine's* saying *I am truth*.

Sav. Had *Mr Congreve* us'd the words he design'd at first, it had given less offence.

Bev. Advanc'd to my third Chapter concerning the abuse of the Clergy. P. 65.

Sav. If there were ever any such Clergy-men in being as *Spintext* and *Prig*, I believe the Poets may make use of 'em without offending the rules of Decency or Religion. No body would have the worse opinion of a truly pious Divine, if they saw the late Parson of *Croyden* lash'd for his abusing his office. Neither will any one have the greater

greater deference for the Gown, because Mr *Collier* demands it so haughtily. The same reasons which I gave for bringing Quality into our Comedies, will serve for those who scandalize the Ministry. If any person makes himself the Subject of *Satyr*, let him suffer for't to deter others. And a Poet must know little of his art if he can't expose the men without affronting their office, tho they must be shewn to be what they are, that others may the sooner think themselves concern'd in the reproof. 'Tis plain enough Mr *Collier* stands up so much for the Clergy, to make a party among 'em to support his pretences; and he design'd without doubt to begin the War (which some of those, who deserve least from the Laity) long to see declar'd against 'em. The Laity have encroacht too much on their Learning, and this province has lately been too much neglected by many of their Gown, by which means 'tis hardly now to be recover'd out of the hands of those who have made such large acquisitions in it. 'Tis impossible for a man of Letters to respect very much a person, meerly be-

cause

cause he wears a Cassock, to which he has no other title than the Bounty of his Patron. Let Mr *Collier*, think what he will of Mr *Congreve* and our best Poets, they honour the memory of the late Archbishop, Dr *Tillotson*, more than himself, and some that we might name. They have learnt from him most of the proficiencies they make in Language, which they are ready gratefully to own. Bp *Stillington*, Bp *Burnet*, Bp *Patrick*, will ever be esteem'd in this and all ages for their Piety and Learning. And who of our present Bishops are there, that for their exemplary Piety and Learning, don't demand as much honour, as for the Seats they hold in the House of Peers. The *Sherlocks*, the *Halleys*, the *Birches*, the *Wakes*, the *Manninghams*, the *Atterburys*, are names which will be reverenc'd by all futurity, as well as in our days, by every one who loves good sense and true erudition. These are indeed the Glories of our Nation and Religion, and their Merit and Virtue blazon their Escutcheons better than Garter or Stones. Such men will be as unwilling to dispute Precedence, as any man of breeding

ing would be to refuse it 'em. They will never want a Herald to authorize their claims, and can never appear any where but with Lustre. For their sakes the whole order live in the esteem, which is inseparable from their function. Yet the *Cluers*, the *Jones*, the *Hickringils*, the *Cooks*, the *Snetts*, and some more we could mention, will always be distinguished from such men as these; and let 'em protest as much as they think fit against Satyr, they will perpetually feel it. If their defects or vices are not too scandalous to appear. Is not a Parson incessantly embroyl'd in Litigious Suits with his Parishioners for Tythes? another at All-fours at his Clerks, another shamefully making unlawful Love to his Neighbours Wife, another plotting against the Government, and encouraging Sedition, another reeling to his Vicaridge from a drunken Patron, another starving his family for a spendthrift heir, another ridiculing the faith he preaches, or profaning the name we adore; another sullenly setting his Neighbourhood at variance or foolishly talking or writing on things he does not understand, to
shew

shew his reading? Are not these Subjects for the Poets, or other more important Satyr?

Bev. You are answering Mr Collier before I have read him.

Sav. You'll find nothing in him more than he had said before, till you come to the 74th page; and I believe unless you have any objection to what I assert, you'll not be pleas'd with his argument, tho 'tis notably divided.

Bev. However, I'll read it.

Sav. With all my heart; in the mean time I'll look over *Moliere's* Preface, to his *l' Imposteur*, which we may have occasion for hereafter.

Bev. I think Mr Collier says, the Poets are not to be judges of the failings P. 68. of the Clergy.

Sav. They may judge those who are arraign'd at their Bar, and punish em their way, as well as others, for Sottishness, Cowardice, Extortion, or any other Vice which the Law takes cognizance of. A Poet can't set a man in the Stocks for being drunk, nor break an Officer for being a Coward, nor fine a man for Extortion, neither can he pull the Gown over a disorder-

F ly

ly Parsons ears; but, if he can, he may make 'em all aſham'd of their faults, by ſhewing their Characters ridiculous. Let a Clergy-man be a Fop or a Rake, a Pedant or Coxcomb, he is accountable in the Poets Court for his Lewdneſs and Folly. Their puniſhment is to expoſe him, and in many caſes the Law can do no more, ſometimes not ſo much.

Amend.
72.

• *Bev.* I am come to the 74th page, and would fain know what you can reply to his 1ſt, 2d, 3d, and 4th answers to Mr Congreve, who ſays, *that if Kings may be expos'd, why mayn't Priests.*

• *Sav.* 'Tis not my way to run diviſions on an argument, but I think his answers are all of 'em ſophiſtical. He ſays, *Kings are willing to be disciplin'd, but the Church is brought on the Stage againſt her conſent.* I deny that the Church is brought on the Stage, or that ever a Priſt was ſhewn there to affront their whole Order. The Church is not guilty of Hypocriſie, Drunkenneſs, Lewdneſs, Covetouſneſs, Faction, nor any of the Vices which ſome of its worſt Members are ridicul'd for. Every
body

body distinguishes an idle Vicar, from
a pious and awful Convocation.

Ben. This is the same thing you said
a little while ago.

Sav. A man that answers Mr Collier,
will be oblig'd to repeat a great many
things over and over, as he does, or
the world may think him in the right
in one place, when they had condemn'd
him in another.

Ben. And, Stage Princes are us'd dis-
agreeably to their station.

• 3dly, If Princes were us'd as ill as
Priests.

Sav. They would without doubt be very
angry, and the Poets are not to be blam'd
for being more afraid of a Kings frown
than Mr Collier's. Whatever Mr Con-
greve is for, his Adversary 'tis plain, is
for levelling. If a Gentleman who takes
Orders does not lose his Place with his
Title, I hope that of Clerk is not equal
with Majesty. Gentlemen are us'd as
freely, and much more so than Priests,
guilty of the same disorders, tho the
Quality is the same. If a Justice
of Peace is made a Coxcomb or a
Blockhead, I hope 'tis of no conse-
quence that the Prince who gave him

the Commission is affronted, for 'tis not possible that a King should know any thing of the person he entrusts, who perhaps never did, nor never will see the Court, but by information, wherein Interest and Party may be concern'd: neither is the Ordinary abused by shewing one of his Clergy a Fool: Kings and Princes are never brought into Comedy, no more are Bishops; these being the heads of the Church, and those of the State, are alike forbidden to be profan'd by Comedy; to strike at them wou'd be to strike at the foundation of both Church and State: but their Subjects and Inferiours, of all other ranks, when they can be ridicul'd without offence to the State, or Religion have been and may be expos'd. Mr Collier perhaps wou'd be well enough pleas'd if a Parson was brought on the Stage, provided a Herald went before with his Coat of Arms, and made room for his appearance in figure, with a good grace, and a lofty mien, like the Cardinals in *Cesar Borgia*; he wou'd not much value how wicked they were made, provided the degree of Clerkship was maintain'd;

tain'd, and yet the Poets have manag'd themselves so warily, that they never dealt with any of 'em above a Vicar or a Chaplain. The Bar-Gown has often been play'd with, and shewn in a more despicable figure, yet the Lawyers don't think it worth their while to cry out against Comedy, as aiming at the ruin of the Courts in *Westminster-hall*, and the Judges themselves have desir'd *Love for Love*, with all the faults Mr Collier has laid to its charge, to be presented 'em, and were extremely well pleas'd with their entertainment; tho' the Lawyer there makes a trivial appearance.

Bev. His pretence of matter of fact is not true. Princes have complain'd of the Theatre.

Sav. This is not the first fling he has had at the Theatre, in this Book, which aim'd at its entire destruction; he forgets what he said in the 8th page, or was sorry for his tenderness. Now he tells you, *Scipio pull'd it down*, *Trajan and Antoninus discourag'd it*, *Tiberius banish'd the Stage*, *Lewis the Godly wou'd not endure a Play-house*, *Queen Elizabeth often checkt it*. Now these

were most of them great Princes; and which is more to the purpose, most of them good ones too. Thus says Mr Collier. And let any one guess if he intimates any thing less than the shutting up the Play-house doors for ever. Mr Congreve's assertion may be easily vindicated. We never read of any great Prince who complain'd of the Theatre itself, some may have corrected the Corruption of some of the Poets and Actors of their times. The greatest Princes that ever liv'd have always encourag'd the Drama; this is so evident, that History is full of the Examples we might instance on this occasion. *Alexander the Great* was so passionate an admirer of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, that story tells he learnt their Tragedies by heart, and sung an Episode of the *Andromeda* of *Euripides* at his last Banquet. *Pompey* was at a prodigious expence to erect a Theatre, and to shew that he was not the more soft nor more effeminate for his love of pleasure, 'twas at the same time he was enlarging the *Roman Empire*, and perhaps contriving to make himself her Master. His Rival *Julius Caesar* has shewn what a value he had for

for Plays by the Tragedies he writ himself, and the fine encomium he left on *Terence*: Whom as great a *Scipio* as he who pull'd down the Stage is said to assist in writing his Comedies. *Augustus* particularly favour'd the Theatre, and those who wrote for't; his affection for *Mecenas*, the Patron of the Stage, and one who honour'd it with his own pieces, and his intimacy with *Varius*, is an unquestionable proof of this. If *Lewis* the Godly, and some other Christian Princes could not endure Plays, they had better reasons for't than Mr *Collier* imposes on 'em. The Entertainments which in those days were shewn on the Stage, were such stuff as might well offend the ear of a Prince less bigotted than he was. If our adversary is acquainted, as without doubt he is, with the wit of those times, he knows their Plays were strange pieces, and not easily endur'd. The Holy Father at *Rome* has often smil'd on the *Italian* Poets. The honours *Petrarch*, and afterwards *Tasso* receiv'd from him, shew that Infallibility cou'd countenance some Wits, whose Muses were not the Chastest that ever appear'd. If those

Authors have left few Dramaticall pieces, 'twas because the Stage was not quite recover'd out of the *Gothick* ignorance, which had obscur'd it for 1400 years. If Queen *Elizabeth* put down the Booths, and forbid the Drolls in *Gracechurch-street*, she encourag'd those Authors who writ the regular Plays, and gave Poets and Actors considerable Pensions. 'Tis said too, that she translated herself severall Tragedies from the *Greek*, which is demonstration enough that she was a Friend to the Theatre. Mr *Collier* himself knows the only *Royal Martyr* that has honour'd the Christian Religion with his sufferings for these thousand years, was very kind to the Stage and the Poets, who were concern'd for't, not to mention his Sons, whose Memories I'm sure are dear to Mr *Collier*. His present Majesty, when he has been at leisure to divert himself from the great Affairs of *Europe*, has commanded severall of our Comedies to be presented him by his Servants in *England*, and has seen *Racine's* Tragedies in *Holland* with satisfaction. And all the world knows her late Majesty of Glorious Memory, was very favourable

ble to the Theatre, honour'd it often with her Presence, and rewarded bountifully some of our Comick Writers. Besides, the Drama has been encourag'd ev'n by Commonwealths as well as Monarchs *in Athens*, let Mr Collier say, what he will of the Sentiments of that Republick, spent more Money in the decorations of her Theatre, and in rewarding those who succeeded there, than in all her Wars, if we may give credit to *Plutarch*, who you will allow as good an authority as the *Short Viewer*, &c. Neither did this wise people, as a learned Author comments on *Plutarch*, believe their Expence unprofitable, since 'twas to inspire their people with notions conformable to the publick good.

Bev. You needed not have said so much to prove what you design by this argument; 'tis most certain, Princes in all ages have been generous to the Poets, and most to those who have pleas'd 'em on the Stage. There are very few exceptions, and those not worth naming, to Mr *Congreve's* general Assertion, that Kings never complain'd of the Theatre or the Poets. You say

say nothing to his 77th and 78th pages.

Sav. I thought you were satisfy'd with what I reply'd before, when I endeavour'd to demonstrate, that a Clergy-man might be made ridiculous in publick if he is so in private. Mr *Congreve* never intended to take away the common right of the Clergy; he only quoted Mr *Hales* to shew the difference between some Clergy-men and others. Such as Mr *Hales* will meet with no occasion to have their priviledge pleaded, but such as our Adversary, who will be sure to juttle themselves into their places, must expect some rubs in their way.

79.

Bev. My meaning is, if it were design'd for the Theatre.

Sav. He then would have had nothing to object against the *Athalie* of *Racine*. Here again this Gentlemen shews his inveteracy to the Stage. He owns the Play to be good, religious and solemn. If so, why not proper for an audience to be entertain'd with it; or why does he object against so fine a Poem, purely because Dramatick, unless he thought all sorts of Dramatick Poetry unsuf-

unsufferable and nothing to be shewn at a Play-house. Moral and pleasant things he has already excluded ; now he forbids the Poets meddling with solemn and religious subjects. Neither the one nor the other will please him, he'll allow no Wit out of his own Company, nor Religion out of his Pulpit.

Bev. But that it was design'd for the Theatre, is more than I know.

Ser. I believe it ; we have had several touches of his acquaintance with the French Tongue, and French Authors.

Bev. And I believe it was not. 79

Ser. The Preface would have giv'n him good reason to have believ'd otherwise, if he had ever read it. I will not say by him as he does by Mr Congreve, with reference to *Pineda*, that I suspect he never saw it ; for I have good ground to mistrust, that tho he has perhaps seen it, he has not read it. To answer his belief at once, *Racine* tells you himself that it was acted, and there are thousands living, who saw it on the Stage, which is a good argument against his insinuations, that it cannot be made useful. The

Author

Author of *Athalie* informs you in his Preface;

Racine
Pref. to
Ath.

On me tronera peut estre un peu bardi d'avoir mettre sur la scene un prophete inspire de Dieu & qui predit l'avenir, &c.

Def. p. 79.

Bev. I had a glympse of him just now. Best of all, 'tis more than he has of himself, sometimes lewd but not little, there's a paradox for ye. Well, I grant some people are both.

Sav. I desir'd you to read those excellent Sentences, to remember you of the Gentlemans breeding, and to excuse the Liberty I take with him. That *some people are both*, bears a very civil construction, and is a taste of that Language which is refin'd from *Bullingfate*.

P. 80.

Bev. He means the pedantical Cant of Aristotle, Horace, Bossu and Corneille.

Sav. Why so positive, I'll assure him that neither Mr Congreve nor any body who is acquainted with Mr Collier's reading, could never mean so. The Translation of Father Hedelin's *Art of the Stage*, is doubtless what he meant; he may be furnish'd with pedantical
Cant

Cant enough there, or in the *Essay on Dramatick Poetry*, which he quotes so often. The Candle-Snuffer can talk to you of the three Uivities, and the Scene-keepers judge of one of 'em, better than our Critick does.

Bev. He would blanch this foul character; but alas! 'tis to no purpose to wash and rub, the spots are not dirt but complexion.

Sav. When Mr Collier is fond of a Metaphor, you find he's loath to part with it; he will then continue it perhaps an whole period; but when the simile is too strong for him, and he can't manage it, he changes 7 or 8 times in a Sentence, this 'tis plain was borrow'd from his Laundress. The blanching of a pair of Sheets, and washing and rubbing is propriety of Speech, so is, the spots are not dirt, but complexion is a bold word; and the Washer-women seldom use it in the phrase of the Tub. If Mr Collier takes his metaphors from the Mob, he should be faithful to his originals, and not make 'em speak more nonsense than they are guilty of.

Bev.

Bev. Let his Language alone, and mind his Reasoning.

Sav. Are you come to that then, you abandon his Style I perceive. Well, I did not think you would have been weary on't so soon: Some men have prefer'd him to the late Archbishop or the Bp of Rochester, and the people to their darling Sir Roger L' Estrange.

Bev. I think however, his Style is not contemptible.

Sav. I should think so too; if he did not himself believe it excellent; I'm sure 'tis nearer the first than the last.

81.

Bev. So much for his honesty.

Sav. And are not the impatience of Creditors, the hardships of a Prison, and absence from a Mistress, enough to make an honest man sign an obligation, which he would endeavour after to be reliev'd from. In civil things of the highest consequence, agreements under confinement are always void of course; and since 'tis not so in matters of Common Law, a man may endeavour to do himself Justice, when others who impos'd on his necessities had wrong'd him, and yet be no Cheat. Mr Collier thought his bare saying *So much for his*
ho-

honesty would be sufficient, and that his Readers would take a word from his mouth, instead of proof. Pray read what *Valentine* says, which occasions this smart conclusion.

Val. This condition was propos'd before, I refus'd it; but the present Impatience of my Creditors for their Money, and my own Impatience of Confinement, and absence from *Angelica*, forc'd me to consent,

Love for Love, p. 2.

To the cutting off the reversion of his Fathers Estate to him, by a Bond, and would not you or any man do the same, rather than starve in a Prison, or not see a Woman you Love, and one whose Fortune would redeem yours. If a Father was so wicked as to take this opportunity, to oblige his Son to comply with his unjust demands, would not any Son do all that lay in his power to break such a Contract, and might he not effect it without being censur'd for a Rascal.

Bro. I would have acted as *Valentine* did.

Sav.

Ser. So would I, and as scrupulous as our adversary shews himself, such a temptation wou'd go very near with him, yet we shou'd either of us I suppose be angry with a person that should dispute our honesty.

P. 83.

Bev. *The Psalmists authority may be better than Mr Congreve's.*

Ser. This Paragraph is a very great Compliment on all the People of Quality and Merit who frequent the Playhouse, and divert themselves with the representations there. I'm sure the using Scripture to back his personal Quarrel with the Poets is more Profane than the Liberties they are accus'd of for Exposing Holy persons which is abominable. There never was a holy person expos'd by the most profligate writers. Every Parson is not what he shou'd be, a Holy Person, and none but those who are not so were ever ridicul'd. They are the Hypocrites and Cheats, who are discover'd in their guilt, and punish'd with shame. I beg your pardon for repeating this vindication again and again, 'twas necessary here to shew he is angry for nothing, and concerns the Scripture in his passion.

Bev.

Rev. The Fathers censure of the Stage P. 83.
of which I gave many Instances was an oversight of Zeal.

Sav. He thinks he has Mr Congreve now at an advantage, for presuming to say the zeal of the Fathers was an oversight, tho this is not the only oversight the Fathers made, their zeal often transported 'em, to do incongruous actions. Sometimes they condemn'd the *Platonic* Philosophy, and then the *Aristotelian*, the one was damnable at one time, and the other at another, one encourag'd and recommended by some Fathers, and accus'd and forbidden by others. *Origen* and some more of 'em fell into dangerous errors by their study of *Plato*, whom *Tertullian* stiles the Author of the Heresies of those times. *St Austin* in his younger years cry'd up *Plato*, and *Aristotle* in his old Age, approving and disproving both by turns; yet in these days both *Plato* and *Aristotle* are read in our Schools. The Author of the Letter to A. H. Esq; has said enough on this matter. The Fathers might err, and did err, as much as men do now. Their Authority with Reason and Scripture on their side is of

G

force,

force, otherwise of none, their sayings may be reflected on as well as ours, and are as lyable to exception. The citations which Mr Collier has made from 'em, and their weight, will be examin'd by a person, who, I hear, has apply'd himself to study this matter with care and industry. For my part, I take least notice of his sense of Antiquity, I look on things as they appear now, and if there is nothing to be said against 'em at present, and much for them, had the Fathers, without warrant from Scripture, thunder'd more against 'em than the most zealous of them did against the doctrine of the Antipodes, I should not be byass'd by their authority.

P. 88.

Bev. 'Twill ne're fix the floating of our humours, nor bring us to the steadiness of the Continent: to speak more softly, What is more likely to awaken our passions than these diversions, and to fill us with freaks and fancies, and extravagant amusements.

Sav. I'll answer, if I can, as softly as he askt the Question. Sowing Sediti-on, Inspiring mens minds with the desire of a Revolution, Preaching against the

the Government, or for those, who to the utmost of their power have contriv'd its ruin. These things are more likely to awaken our passions, and such passions as are more dangerous than freaks and fancies both to the State and our selves. If a good man or woman shou'd dream all night of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, the murder in *Julius Caesar*, of the fellow in the Tub in Sir *George Etheridge's* Comedy, or the Scowrers in *Shadwell's*, they may lose the pleasure of a sound nap, but they need not fear being hang'd for't. If trifles make a slight impression on their minds for the present it soon wears off, and without such amusements their fancies might have been worse employ'd.

Bev. To the authority of this Father ^{P. 86.}
shall subjoyn that of Horace.

Sav. I slip over his authority from *Horace*, not imagining you wou'd value what that greatest of Poets and Criticks said against the Drama. When the *Roman* Theatre was debauch'd by the abuse of the Chorus's and Musick, especially since he says it in the same Poem, in which he takes so much care to inform the Stage-writers, how to

Reflexions on the Stage.

ucceed, and gives those who had done well such immortal praises; he is not talking of the Theatre as 'twas in its self, but as 'twas corrupted by the Laziness, Luxury, and Ignorance of those times, when by the vast numbers of Villagers who had obtain'd the freedom of the City, and were made Denizens of Rome, the publick taste began to be vitiated. The people, as they are now, were fond of any thing new and extravagant. The Chorus's that us'd to be Lessons of morality, were grown lewd and irregular.

Hor.
Poet.

*Ille bonis, faveatque & concilietur amicis.
Et regat iratos, & amet peccare timentes,
Ille dapas laudet Mensa brevis, ille salubrem,*

*Justitiam, Legesque & apertis otia portis
Ille regat Commissa: Deosque precetur &
aret*

Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.

This was the office of the person who spoke first for the Chorus, and how dangerous wou'd a Theatre be under such discipline. The Verses were simple and modest, the Music the same,
and

Reflections on the Stage.

23

and suited to the smallness of their House, which was answerable to the numbers of the people,

Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vineta, tubaque

Æmula, sed tenuis simplexque, foramine paucō

Aspirare, & adesse Choris erat utilis, atque

Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia statu,

Quo sane populus, &c.

How then does *Horace's* authority agree with the Fathers. The Father is against the Stage in general, *Horace* only against the irregularity of the Musick and Musicians, who were grown infamously rampant in their behaviour and dress, and chang'd the simplicity and gravity of the first Chorus, to a high and lofty tone, which might fill the Theatre, as it had been enlarg'd by the magnificence of the *Romans*, then masters of the world,

Postquam cepit agras extendere victor, &

Urbem,

Latior amplecti murus vinoque diurno

G 2

Pla

*Placari Getulis festis impune aledus,
 Accessit numerisque modisq; licentia Major
 Indoctus quid enim saperet, liberque la-
 borum,
 Rusticus Urbano confusus, turpis honesto?*

I am very glad I had my *Horace* by me, that you might be satisfy'd what a fair and powerful Adversary we have to deal with; and this is the authority which he shall subjoin to *St Austin*. He mistook *Horace's* speaking of the corruption of the Chorus for his censuring the *Drama*, he was led away by *Dacier's* Marginal Notes, and I am apt to suspect Marginal Notes and Indexes the most considerable part of his reading; for if he had read a page or two farther in *Dacier*, he would have found that 'tis not so remarkable as he thinks in *Horace*, to commend the old Romans for not frequenting the Theatre; for he commends the modesty of their Plays, and the virtue of those times, which would not endure the disorders of the *Roman Theatre*, in the latter days of *Augustus*. *Dacier* says page 246 of the same vol. in his remarks on

Utiliumq; sagax rerum & divina futuri.

That Horace does not in the least talk of Tragedy in general, he speaks only of the Chorus, and explains how it came to be corrupted from its first simplicity. Thus 'tis plain for what Dacier gives his four reasons for the Romans not frequenting the Theatre so much as they did afterwards, which reasons Horace had given before him, for no other end, but to shew the virtue of the first Stage, and the vices of the last, which no body can vindicate; and yet no sensible man would be for destroying a Theatre, because it has not been always supported with the purity it requires. You see now, that Dacier's authority is ruin'd from Dacier himself as well as Horace. The pains he took with Aristotle's *Arte Poetica*, wherein the Tragick Muse is preferr'd to the Heroick, is a sufficient argument that he did not believe the Theatre ought to be condemn'd as inconsistent with Prudence or Religion.

Bev. Mr Collier says as much. As⁸⁹. for innocent diversion, I have nothing to say against 'em.

Sav. He has said as much as he could against the Stage in general. His bringing in the Fathers who were for none at all, and a great many other hints of its danger, are good proof, that he would have the world at least believe he is not for innocent diversions, wheremen are to be made merry with Fools or Hypocrites. If he is for such entertainments, why all this stir and noise? does he suppose 'tis impossible to write an innocent Play? what would he make of *Racine*? *Esther* and *Athelia*? what of a great part of *Corneilles*, and *Monsieur Boyer's* Tragedies; and if so much can't be said for our own in this point as for the *French*, 'tis because our Poets err'd to please a humorous people, and never offended against Decency or Religion, but at the same time broke thro their art: those of 'em who are most faulty know least of what they profess; the little Writers that take for their whimsies will not long please the Town, when their taste is once refin'd; then such only as are masters of their art will be applauded, and then *Mr Collier* will have no need to complain for himself or the age; for this is certain, that a good Poet must write

write like a good man, because he is to instruct as well as please; and a true Wit will never descend to buffooning. *Rain* says all Poetry that is against manners is against art, and *Bossu*, that a pernicious art is no art at all, at least not sufferable; and another great Author that none but little Genius's will descend to speak indecencies or impurities. Let such Writers be treated as Mr *Collier* pleases, I am of his opinion, that they cannot make an innocent diversion. Their knowledge of the Town, which they boast of, is a Science they dare not tell how they came by, the spirit of their Dialogue, Impudence, and Extravagance: A Reformation for these is of absolute necessity, and the only way to reform 'em is, to silence them. To which all that love their Morals or Understandings, will consent with joy.

Bev. Mr Congreve goes on with his P. 88.
Panegyrick on his Country.

Sav. Mr *Collier* is not satisfy'd with engaging the Nobility, Clergy, and Magistracy to his assistance, he complements now the whole Kingdom, and is setting them against his Animadversor.

Bev.

16.

Bev. I somewhat Question the truth as well as civility of this reflection.

Sav. Who would take Mr Collier for an Englishman, he is so great a Champion for his Nation, that he will not believe the weekly Bills, nor allow any *Felo de se's* to be heard of in England. This controversy is very comical, and the Parish Clerks, the Searchers, or Coroners Inquests, can only put an end to't, to them he's referr'd for satisfaction.

P. 29.

Bev. From whence are all our Plots, &c. Let them come from whence they will, we had better have them than some peoples Remedies.

Sav. This is not the first fine thing Mr Collier has said of the Dissenters, he would not have cajol'd them so in King Charles the Second's latter days, but he did not foresee then that he could have been so much a Schismatick, as to Dissent from the Church, as by Law establish'd.

Bev. But I still crave leave to believe that a mistaken conscience is more serviceable than none at all.

Sav. He shall have leave to believe what he pleases, for here he speaks softly.

solutely. I confess I never study'd speculative Divinity, and 'tis a little bold in me not to be of the same sentiments with a profest Divine and a M. A. Yet I am of opinion, he has shewn himself not very knowing ev'n in his own way. Obstinacy is generally the Companion of error in Religion; a man that has a mistaken Conscience, often firmly believes he's in the right, and dies in that belief. A wicked man knows his own guilt but has not Grace enough to amend, or desire to be better. Strong perswasion may inspire him with a fear of punishment, and convince him of the danger of his ways: Such a one is certainly more likely to be converted to the true Religion, than one who thinks his is the true, and will not hearken to any other, whereas a wicked man can't suppose he's in the right, whatever he says or practises; and there's more hopes of the Conversion of a lewd Fellow, than a Quaker to the Orthodox Faith.

Rev. He concludes his Book with an P. 90.
unfair Quotation about Musick, but I
shall pass it over.

Sav.

Short
View, P.
278, 279,
280.

Saw. Left it should not appear so unfair as he affirms 'tis, he says, *he does not say Musick is directly vitious, but that the art is meanly prostituted, design'd to lay thinking and reflexion asleep.* It helps a lascivious sentence to slide, drowns the disorders of Atheism, excites a sportive humour, warms the passions, unlocks the fancy, makes it open to pleasure, throws a man off his Guard, keeps off the aversions of Conscience, makes way for an ill impression, is most commodiously planted to do mischief, refreshes the Ideas of the action of a bad Poem, is true to the subject and the tunes, are generally airy and gallardizing. He tells out of Tully that some Musick is dangerous and ensnaring, and talks of one Timotheus that was silenc'd for having a string too much to his Fiddle. Mr Collier probably would have expected a Pun here, but I was resolv'd to disappoint him. If all these Elegant Allegations are not enough to shew his good dispositions to Musick, look over his last pages of his *Short View*, and you will be satisfy'd why he past over answering Mr Congreve's Quotation.

Bew.

Bev. To come to his criticisms upon ⁹⁰
some of my expressions.

Sav. Ay, pray let us be attentive here, this is the place where he fancies he can shew himself most, and make the best flourishes.

Bev. The Ladies fancy slip stocking high is an allusion to a Book very well ⁹⁰
known.

Sav. Yes, we have seen where he has learnt other things from that Author; his forcible way of dividing his repetitions, and hammering a thought till he has beaten it to nothing. If you remember what we read just now out of his *Short View*, concerning Musick, there are many instances of his Rhetorick in *Dr Eachard*.

Bev. The upper end of a Government is a defensible expression.

Sav. Enough, we'll take his word for't; 'twould be hard if we should refuse him so small a favour, after so many proofs of his Eloquence, tho the upper end of a Table, or an Alley, or a May-pole, would be much more in propriety of Speech.

Bev. The Litter of Epithets I have answer'd already.

Sav.

Sav. You remember how ; but with Mr Collier Questions are as easily answer'd as started.

Bev. His exception to big alliances is somewhat unfairly transcrib'd.

Sav. Indeed Mr Congreve has not nam'd a quarter of the places where Big is very foolishly us'd. I once was about to make a Collection of that and some words like it, particularly his affected use of *Ceremony* in the *Defence*, but I thought 'twould be troubling my head with Straws, so I left 'em to his Readers.

Bev. Well, but he attacks Mr Congreve for faults in style too.

Sav. Examine him with the *Mourning Bride*, and see whether they are not rather boldnesses of Expression, beautiful in Tragedy, than Errors. Our Adversary is as likely to mistake one for the other, as most I meet with. *Respiring Lips* and *noon of Night*, I am sure as Mr Congreve has us'd them, are expressions proper enough in Poetry, though they had been outrageous in Prose.

And

*And felt the balm of her respiring Lips,
And all was still as at the noon of night.*

No body expects that Mr Collier should relish what he does not understand, but then he ought not to make exceptions.

Bev. Is the best Image of a parcel of Cats running up a wall.

*Sav. Mr Collier's Images are ever poor and filthy, a litter of Whelps, a kennel of Beaus, a parcel of Catts and drown'd Rats. The man has a very Gentleman-like manner of thinking, and 'tis pity he had not treated on some subject where he had an opportunity to distinguish himself better. I desire you wou'd be short with his Criticisms, we have seen already, what a Judge he is of Language and Poetry. He talks ill enough in his own way, but it must be more wretched when he's out on't, his Raillery is as awkward as his Breeding, he aims at something in both, but never looks more ridiculous, than when he wou'd appear most witty or civil, which every one must do, that does not know what is nature in both, as
you'll*

you'll find by his last Paragraph relating to Mr Congreve.

Bev. But this is somewhat unfortunate; one won'd have thought, if he had neither modesty to make 'em, nor reason to defend them, he might at least have had a little conscience to have given them up.

Sav. Here's Ceremony at parting, a Bully could not have gone out of Company more abruptly, let him if he pleases think me rude for my Comparison, 'tis impossible for a man to read him often, and keep within Temper. What think you of him now?

Bev. I have not that Glorious Idea of him, which before possess'd me, but still why did the Town cry him up so much if there's nothing in him.

Sav. Mr Collier will rail aloud at me for incivility, shou'd I pretend to accuse the Town of weakness, and a Town where there are as many men of good Sense, and true Wit as any in the World. Yet this very Town has always been extreamly whimsical in her favours to men in their reputation. She has all along set up one Coxcomb or another to sport with, blown him up with her praises, and at last left him

him with utmost contempt. Was not the City Laureat once thought a greater Poet than Mr *Dryden*? has not Mr *D*—— had at one time more admirers than Mr *Witcherly*? after this did not Sir *R. B.* carry away the Lawrel from all who pretended to't, and those very Heroick Poems which he confesses were written in a Hackney Coach, preferr'd to *Milton* and *Virgil*, the work of half an age, and of the greatest Genius's that ever liv'd. And are not those Gentlemen's writings in a fair way to eternal oblivion? The Play-house was ripe for correction. The Town approv'd something that lookt like aiming at it. This made her kind to Mr *Collier's* attempt, and her kindness to the design was the reason she overlookt the performance. You may be sure she will know the man better in a little while, and you need not fear of being single in your opinion, if you are convinc'd that there is a better way of viewing the immorality of the Stage, than he has or can shew us.

Bev. Since the Stage is so ripe for reproof, why does not some other more capable person set about it?

H

Sav.

100 *Sen.* 'Tis an ungrateful task to expose the faults of so powerful a Party, unless the publick would encourage it, and hearken to means of bringing the Theatre to reason without endeavouring to destroy it. No man of sense will think of speaking against it, while people are in so wild an humour; when they come to themselves, enough would put the Poets in a way to please them, without endangering their Virtue, and make the Stage-entertainments their most sensible and useful pleasure.

101 *Ben.* We may talk of this hereafter, if you please we'll read that part of the Defence, which censures the Short Vindication of the Relapse, &c.

102 *Sen.* It grows late, and we have had enough of Mr Collier at present; if you are not otherwise engag'd, we'll run over that to-morrow: And Clarret now will be much more refreshing, after a tedious conversation about our adversaries trifles.

103 *Ben.* I am not so very eager to part with all my kind sentiments of him at once, but I can adjourn the dispute for a Bottle. To-morrow, if you please, we'll

we'll finish it. I'll be with you at 5.

Sav. You are always welcome. I'll expect you then. Come, Sir, a health to a regulated Stage and the Muses.

Bev. I'll do you reason.

The End of the Second Dialogue.

The Third Dialogue.

Bevill, Savage.

Bev. **G**ood morrow, Sir, Excellent Wine and a Friend like you are not soon to be parted with. I little thought to have been so very troublesome to you, and made a night on't; but when we are set in, and like the Company, 'tis hard to promise one's self what time we shall leave it.

Sav. I am glad any thing tempted you to stay with me till morning; we drank little in comparison of what they take for a dose in *Convent-garden*. I hope the Claret agrees with you.

Bev. To a miracle. I am't always so

ferene next day as you see me now, drinking suits not at all with my constitution, and I pay for the pleasure of the night by my qualms and vapours after it. But now my head is as clear as Nature made it, and you shall find that I can read Mr. *Collier* anon without interruption.

Sav. Why not before dinner? for you may be sure I'll not let you stir till we've din'd, since the Wine sits so well with you, we'll make an end with him out of hand. I shall have less to object against the Scruples in the Reply than those in the Defence; for, tho I pay all the deference in the world to the author of the *Relapse*, for his Wit, and the Moral of that Play, which I think very instructive, yet I own there are some Liberties in his Comedies, especially the *Provok'd Wife*, which Mr *Collier* had reason to censure. However, we'll see if he does not wrest his meaning sometimes as well as Mr *Congreve's* and endeavour to make his errors an argument for putting an end to the Drama.

Bev. One freedom betrays me to another; if you'll promise to see the
new

new Tragedy with me in the evening,
I'll accept of your invitation.

Sav. You mean *Rinaldo* and *Armida*.

Bev. I have heard of no other.

Sav. With all my heart, I have seen
it 3 or 4 times already, but the Musick
is so fine, and the Play pleases me so
well, that I shall not think it a burthen
to keep you on those terms.

Bev. I never saw it since the third
day, and was then alone; your judg-
ment will very much confirm the plea-
sure I had at that entertainment.

Sav. We'll refer this discourse till
we are in the Pit, and now let's sit and
talk with our friend Mr *Collier*.

Bev. You know the reading him
is my task, by agreement, so pray
don't break in on our Articles.

Sav. I can hardly compliment you so
far, do as you will.

Bev. *The Vindicator* and his Brethren P. 98.
have an admirable way of defending
themselves from indecencies, if you detect
them they tell you 'tis your own constru-
tion.

Sav. Is not his construction of *Not a
woman kind, and circling joys tread round
the happy year*, is not that Bawdy only in

our Adversarys acceptation, was there any harm in these words before he had *struck 'em off into a light sense.* You don't forget what was said on this before, and how he appear'd to you then to be abominable, in the sense he put on innocent words ; and can you read this affirmation of his without blushing for him ?

Bev. You are warm already.

Sav. Is there not reason for this vehemence, to see a man guilty of such unfair dealing, to find it prov'd upon him, and yet to meet him endeavouring to throw off his guilt by such impotent railery, is sufficient to provoke the most calm Reader that ever saw his *Short View*, or his *Defence*. And you see he ambles on with his brisk sentences, as if he had really nothing to answer for. *As if the knowledge of Good and Evil was Criminal, and to shew one fault was to make another.* I'm asham'd to repeat such stuff, the sense of these dapper Periods and their Rhetorick are equally extraordinary. Criminal and faulty are all one ; if there is any difference, criminal is the stronger word, which he enforces with a weaker. He means

means as if the knowledge of Good and Evil was faulty, and to shew one fault was to make another fault. Here are amplification and reasoning. 'Tis without doubt criminal to have such an exquisite skill in the knowledge of Evil, as to extract it out of the most innocent things, as Spiders suck Poyson out of Flowers. To discover a fault where there was none, is to make your self guilty for your own discovery. That he has done so, has been prov'd, and that he will do so again, before we have gone through with the Reply, I don't in the least question. This Paragraph is a *Nonpareil* for the pert turn of his Sentences, unless it be the next where you have almost a Sentence in every line, 17 or 18, in 3 or 6 and twenty, and every one of 'em the same thing in other words: he is very lavish of his words, but a niggard of his sense, tho one can't blame a man that has but a little stock to be sparing in his expences.

Bev. I see you are transported; and yet you are not like the greatest part of Mankind, who lose their reason when they give way to passion.

H 4

Sav.

Sav. It vexes me that I'm oblig'd to take notice of trifles, yet these very trifles have been mistaken for Beauties.

Def. 99.

Bev. Sure there is not upon earth so impertinent a thing as a woman's modesty.

Sav. That and Bellinda's answer are the subject on which he harangues his Reader with those elegant Periods. He says he has prov'd that no Profaneness is excusable in any Character, and we have on the contrary disprov'd him by the example of Cowly and Milton, and the authority of Pere Bossu. Cowly takes the whole parable of the Prodigal, and serves himself on't, for an allusion to his passion in his Mistress. You need only read those Verses, and the other Copies in that part of his Book, to be inform'd how he has taken from the most Religious Stories, to make comparisons for his Love. I'll not vindicate this in him, nor in the Stage-writers, yet 'tis an argument that the best of Poets have made use of serious phrases; and none till now thought 'em so flamingly wicked for't. If profaneness in any Character ought not to be excus'd, affectation certainly may,

may. There's no ceremony should privilege any person from being expos'd for his weakness. If a woman affects modesty, and has it not, let the cheat be discover'd as handsomly as may be, without making her appear rampant; and let her be made asham'd of her Hypocrisie; our Adversary is so over civil to the fair, that he thinks it a piece of rudeness to suppose they can err, and ill manners to ridicule their faults, tho in order to reform 'em. This is nicety indeed, and a man of this Conscience ought to struggle hard for decency.

Bev. We don't see Comedy garnish'd with Parliament House Speeches.

Sav. I keep to my first principals, and when I deliver'd up Mr Congreve's 4th *Postulate* to Mr Collier, I had not the least reserve for't, else I should have objected against the three or four last pages. I don't stop now to vindicate the use of Scripture phrases, by saying that Parliament House Speeches have been a garnish to Comedy. I think 'em none, and that 'tis impudent to shew a Senator making ridiculous harangues. Whatever opinion a man
has

has of some of the Speeches made there, or of the ability of many Members to speak in so awful an Assembly, I'm sure 'tis prodigious folly for any one to attempt exposing 'em on the Stage. The Respect due to so venerable an House, has kept the Poets within bounds, supposing only their fear of Punishment, has been the occasion of their modesty in this particular; yet they have, as Mr *Collier* observes, been very cautious how they have touch'd on privilege. Tho this has been sometimes done, and our Adversary is extraordinary tender towards the Poets, to shew his own ignorance to lessen their guilt. The Senator in *Venice preserv'd* was copy'd from some body that the Court design'd then to laugh at, and the Oration he makes is not the least part of the pleasure which those that will rather laugh than cry take at that Tragedy. Yet such things shou'd be utterly exploded, and had not been nam'd, if Mr *Collier* had not so frankly said we don't see, &c.

P. 109.

Bev. The Vindicator complains I won't take his word in the business of Pimping; under favor he does me wrong, I never question'd

tion'd his experience in these matters ; I am willing to believe him a good authority, and that he is qualify'd to pronounce on the growth and improvement of the mystery.

Sav. This is some of that Language which might easily be translated into *Billingsgate*, as well as he can he gives it an air of railery ; but would a man take it kindly to be call'd *Pimp* in affected phrase ? or will the screwing up of the mouth make the affront the less ? If a Rascal should tell you he believes your Mother was kind to some other man besides your Father, or else you had never came into the world, would not you use him as scurvily as if he call'd you Son of a Whore ; and yet this same Mr *Collier* imposes himself on us for a man of breeding, decency, ceremony, and all that ; we know not how he came by them, nor when he will discover his accomplishments, but at present we will not take his word for 'em.

Bev. He tells you, 'tis a dull thing not to expect any thing not dull from a Nurse. And why so, as slender people are entertaining sometimes.

Sav.

Ser. Is slenderness then a necessary quality of a Nurse, or does their living on Caudles and Chicken-broth, screw their Wastes into the compass of a Span ; good Ale and a lazy life have had *bigger* effects on some of 'em. If those of Mr *Collier's* acquaintance are so extreamly well shapt, which perhaps may render them very entertaining sometimes. *Yet as slender people.* This expression is very pleasant, and whoever heard before that a man is of slender quality, unless he had been two or three years in a Consumption ; who that would write fine will not be acquainted with our Adversaries delicate manner ?

P. 110.

Bev. But tho she has not Wit, she might have Humour.

Ser. Then 'tis plain he thinks a Nurses Humour might be taking without Wit. I'll say no more on this matter, there are a hundred stories scurrilously told of the *Prue's and the Abigalls, the Chaptains and the Clerks,* and a man might have too great a temptation if he thought much more on't.

Bev.

Bev. I see you have forgot your passion.

Sav. He that would be out of humour with Mr *Collier* for this Paragraph, is certainly not to be pleas'd on any terms ; and when a man does so much to make one merry, 'twere cruel to disappoint him.

Bev. To play the downright Wife, and P. 112.
Cuckold him.

Sav. Here he endeavours to wheedle the Ladies to his side by his civility, after he has attempted to ruin their most agreeable pleasure by attacking the Stage. To serve a loose Husband in his kind is a revenge for a Wife who has not Honour nor Religion to preserve her, without these vanity and resentment would prevail over all of them. For who could bear being abus'd and not seek for satisfaction ? I believe should he without jesting call ever a one of those Ladies he makes his Addresses to *downright Wife*, she would not take it for raillery, whatever *Belinda* meant it.

Bev. This Gentleman is known to be P. 115.
a Master of stile.

Sav.

Sav. He is known to be so in some cases, particularly that which the French call *La Langage des Hautes*, no man ever practic'd that manner of speaking with more success; and because he pleas'd the people, who are charm'd with Malice, however 'tis presented them, Mr Collier tells you *He is known to be a Master of stile*; to be sure he thought him so, or he would not have industriously imitated his Observators and *Æsop's Fables*. The Moon was one time in a heavy twitter, is a beauty of Speech with which Mr Collier, I suppose, was extreamly pleas'd, or else why did he go so far out of the way, to make Sir Roger so whimsical a Compliment. Was there any reason to quote him, when the late Archbishop, the Bishops of Salisbury and Rochester, and Dr Burnet of the Charter-House, have so often us'd Providence in his own sense of the word, which is indeed its true signification; and these are Gentlemen whose excellence of stile, neither the Court nor People ever disputed, but they were too Loyal for his purpose, he would confine Elegance to his Party, tho he might

L' Stran.
Æsop.

might as well refer us to his friends in *Ireland*.

Bev. You are wonderfully disgusted with *Sir Roger*, or else you would not have kept your self so long from the *Reply*.

Sav. I was not sorry at this opportunity to speak my sentiments of the Knight; I taste for my self, if my relish of his Language agrees not with others, let those who oppose it, give me better reasons for't than his reputation; I never could be toucht with his rude way of rallying, nor take his buffoonry for wit.

Bev. Have a care, you will offend against decency, to say of a *Chevalier*, that his wit is buffoonry, is an error in manners, which the *Replier* will very much scruple to forgive you.

Sav. I have said it, and any Knight in Christendom, who talks in the phrase of his Squire, may expect the same freedoms from me.

Bev. Enough of him, at this rate we shall hardly get over the *Reply* before dinner.

Sav. Dispatch it as fast as you please, I am as weary on't as you can be,

be, and with more reason, for I have read it oftner.

Bev. His lame excuse from Character and Manners, I have disprov'd already.

Bev. Are you of his opinion against the arguments and authorities I gave you yesterday.

Bev. I think Satyr ought to have no deference for any one for his Quality, either in the Church or out on't, unless it touches the heads of either the Civil or Ecclesiastical Government, which wou'd be to aim at the foundation of both, but for this passage, (*Bellinda's* blessing) I suppose there's no excuse, because, tho the ridiculousness of some people wearing a Cassock, may be expos'd, yet Religion or Phrases, consecrated by the use she makes of them, ought not to be meddled with on the Stage.

Sav. I make the same difference as you do, between the persons and the things; and the Vindicator ought to have been more discreet.

Bev. I perceive the little Justice I endeavour'd to do that order.

Sav.

He puts the Clergy in mind of his great services to the Gown, in the pains he took to assert their priviledges, and stickle for their precedence. He was not satisfy'd with the harangues he troubled us with in his *Short View* and the *Defence*, but we must have their remonstrances rung in our ears too in the Reply. *Would he have an Ambassador travel like a Carrier, with a Portmanteau behind,* tho I seldom see a Carrier with a Portmanteau behind him. I have seen a very honest Gentleman with a Sack of Corn under him, who was not at all asham'd of his advancement. I'll quickly have done with this controversy, let him continue it as long as he pleases. We have seen how far the Clergy may be laught at, without concerning their office or order in their Quarrel, and by this time I suppose you are convinc'd of his sophistry, and that the Poets never intended to affront the Clergy in general, by their treating those who deserv'd it as scandalously as they liv'd.

Bev. They had nature at their beck, and carry'd Omnipotence about them.

I

Sav.

Sav. To say the Apostles were Omnipotent, is a boldness which will startle many good Christians, and which the Church itself would scarce countenance. I took the liberty to oppose him in his Theology before, when he prefer'd a bad Conscience to none at all. I am't so civil to sinners, as to imagin they are wicked, because they know no better, neither will I give credit to an Atheist, when he tells me he believes there's no God, nor can I consent to what Mr *Collier* has said of the Apostles, at least not as he has exprest it. That they did Miracles is as certain as that we read they did so, but 'twas not by the omnipotence they carry'd about them. 'Twas the Power which the Holy Ghost committed to 'em in return of their Prayers, for the conviction of the unbelieving world on extraordinary occasions. They could have defended themselves from sufferings, and soon have converted both *Jews and Gentiles*, had their power been perfect. Theirs had its bounds, which were enlarg'd at the pleasure of the only omnipotent. Mr *Collier* more than once has err'd in his Divinity,
he

he told us the *Jews* and Christians never took their names from exceptionable persons. I was sure when you read it, he must be very much out, and now I remember the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* St Paul, was before his conversion call'd *Saul*, a name every whit as exceptionable as *Jehu*. Cowly in his *David's* says of *Saul*,

While Saul and Hell, &c. David
1 Book

A man that is not a Master of Arts without a great deal of reading, might have confounded the Divine for his being so positive in things which he must not have study'd over carefully to make such errors.

Bev. Let him practice the same liberty 123.
on a Judge or a Lord Mayor, and see how the jest will take.

Sav. There is no equality in the comparison, a Judge as one of the heads of the Law, the Lord Mayor as the head of the City, ought not to be shewn scandalous, tho Judges and Lord Mayors too have been brought on the Stage, in King *Charles* the Second's Reign. But a man with a Bar-

I 2

Gown

Gown and Livery-Gown, has not the same privilege. There's no fear of making the Law or the City contemptible that way, if Citizens and Lawyers take care by their actions not to give the world other reasons for thinking 'em so. The House of Lords is one of the States of the Kingdom, and to jest on 'em is certainly the highest breach of manners, but every Lord in private and out of his Robes has not the like pretences to exception from scandal, if he's the subject on't. 'Tis time to have done with this dispute, we have had it over and over again in so many places, that 'tis as tiresome to vindicate the Poets, as to read Mr Collier's Charges against 'em, on the affair of ceremony, which the worst of 'em is as good a Judge of as himself.

P. 125.

Bev. Is it the office of a Comick Poet to imitate Justice, then certainly Rewards and Punishments ought to be rightly apply'd.

Sav. If Rewards and Punishments ought to be apply'd, the Guilt as well as the Merit ought to be expos'd. A man must not be condemn'd for nothing, nor can the Audience judge of the

the Crime without hearing the Indictment. The man must appear wicked, before he can be punish'd for his wickedness; and how can he appear so but by his words and actions. If he is lewd in one, the Adversary says he's not to be seen for his *smut*. If in the other, 'tis breach of Manners and Decency. 'Tis very severe usage, if a Poet must bring on a person purely to punish him, and not let the Audience know how he has deserv'd it. Mr *Collier* owns Rewards and Punishments ought to be apply'd, and of consequence contradicts all that he has said about Character and Manners. If the Poet does not correct vicious men, he errs in the Conduct of his Play, and there's no excuse for him. If he does, Mr *Collier* says 'tis his duty. The main difficulty is, how it must be done not to offend him. He must be brought on the Stage and some one tell the Audience, (as the *French* knock their unfortunate Hero's on the head) That the poor fellow has been very wicked behind the Scenes, and is brought out to be manag'd for't, but not a word of his lewdness; which is much like, as if

a Jury should give their Verdict on a Criminal without hearing the Declaration against him. A person well enough known had lately been very much oblig'd, if the Court would have sentenc'd him, and not order'd his accusation to be read, but they did not think fit that Justice should yield to Decency. And perhaps the publication of that Trial, has been as prejudicial to the age, as the most vitious Play which ever was acted, ten thousand people having by this means been inform'd of a Crime, which till then they had never heard of; and yet Justice thought the ill consequence of spreading that paper, would not countervail the advantages the people might reap by being deterr'd from so infamous a villany, when they were acquainted with its punishment.

P. 126.

Bev. For to shew a Religious person ridiculous, is the way to mismark the nature of good and evil.

Sav. Tis granted, but the persons introduc'd on the Stage, are not those truly Religious people, whose natures are mismarkt; they are the Hypocrites and Cheats that abuse their profession,
and

and make Godliness a colour to their Vices. I never knew in the most profligate Comedies, a man ridicul'd that was sincerely religious. *The Testimonys, the Smirks, the Spintexts, the Say-graces, &c.* are of a quite different nature, and they are not in the least mismarkt.

Bev. Does a man who argues against P. 116. Conscience, and talks like an Atheist, never speak his mind.

Sav. If a man who talks like an Atheist speaks his mind, what is he but an Atheist? Mr *Collier* has a pretty way with him, as to his similies. Now to answer the Question as peremptorily as he askt it. A man born in *England*, who has had the benefit of Christian Education, can't speak his mind when he talks like an Atheist. The truth of our Doctrine is so convincing, that there never was in our Nation an Atheist, but in affectation, or one whose Debauches made him desire his Creed might not be true: And this is the reason. Why when a Libertine pleads in his own defence, he must not be suppos'd to be in earnest. Monsieur *de la Bruyere* says in his Chapter of the *Wits of the Age*; There never

was such a thing as an Atheist. And I should blush for the Adversary when he asks such impertinent Questions, but that I hope when he reads 'em again, he'll blush for 'em himself. He's the first Divine that ever made a doubt of the Libertines believing against their practice, or that indeed 'twas possible for a man to be born in Christendom, and be an Atheist from his Soul. The Faith of many may be very sceptical and uncertain; there may be some who have scruples concerning revelation, tho' of those who pretend to argue against it, not one in a thousand thinks as he talks; but a real Atheist is a monster, which no body ever met with besides Mr *Collier*, and I hope he forgot himself when he seem'd to imply that a man may be bred in *London*, and yet speak his mind when he denies the being of a God. I'm sure he was not very *Ceremonious* to his species, in suspecting there could be one of them worse than the Devil, who is said to believe and tremble, as well as curse and revile.

P. 128.

Bev. This squeamishness 'tis possible drew down the severity of the Poet.

Saw.

Sav. And what would Mr *Collier* get by't, if the *Vindicator* confess it. A woman that affects to seem modest, is whimsically nice in her words and actions to outward appearance, while in her heart she's as gallant as those who discover their minds freely ; is not such a one more hurtful than the other ? does not a Hypocrite injure Religion more than a Rake, as an Enemy in our bosom is more dangerous than one that attacks us openly. A Hypocrite cheats himself, and endeavours to cheat his Maker ; a Scoundrel only deceives himself. The man we deal with has a strange tenderness for Hypocrisy, which is unaccountable in a person of his pretences.

Bev. And I suppose the main reason P. 126.
of his saying the Play-house contributes to the happiness of the Nation.

Sav. If he has read Mr *Dennis*, he would have found other reasons for his assertion ; and since he confesses that Author was ingenuous, in acknowledging lewdness promoted by the Stage, he ought to have follow'd his Example, and dealt as ingenuously with him. Mr *Dennis* and all good Judges have

have blam'd the modern Writers for their licentiousness, but the fault is not in the Stage, the humour of the Age gave 'em first the temptation to break thro' their Art to please it; and Mr *Dennis* in the same Book has shewn us, that the Theatre might be rendred, and has been very useful to Mankind in general, and this Nation in particular. Mr *Collier* whenever he thinks fit to fall on the Volunteers, will find it not very easie to answer what the Gentleman we are speaking of has said in vindication of the Drama.

129.

Bev. The *Vindicator* pretends much to morals and instruction about *Loveless* and *Amanda*.

Sav. At our first meeting you may remember I said something to you on the Moral of the *Relapse*, which in my opinion is one of the best I ever met with in Comedy. The Moral of the *Fool in Fashion* gave the hint which I suppose the *Relapser* was well acquainted with, and he has pursu'd it admirably in this other Play.

Bev. I have not forgot what you said on it, I am more reconcil'd to *Vir-
tue in danger*, than I was when I first read the *Short View*.

Sav.

Sav. I had not then seen what the Author had reply'd against his Adversary's Objections : But I perceive our Sentiments were the same, and I hit his design, which indeed any one might do that was not resolv'd to mistake it. Let's see now what Mr Collier says for himself. He talks of a *Venison Pasty and the Lords Prayer*, wishes heartily P. 129. that the Relapser might never fall into temptation, and would throw off the Argument sometimes with a grave look, and sometimes with a smile.

Beu. He would make Loveless and Amanda the chief Character, and to gain this he breaks thro the rules of the Drama. P. 130.

Sav. I will by no means attempt to ^{ibid.} answer for the Author of the *Relapse* ; that he consider'd much the Unities of which the Relapser is so fond. His Plays are extreamly irregular in the Conduct, but there's the Spirit of Comedy in them. The Dialogue is lively, the Humour new and diverting ; the Gentlemen has a great deal of Wit, which is more desirable than a great deal of reading. I can't allow Mr Collier to be a Judge in these matters. I know

know how he came by his Criticisms, and whoever depends on such information, will blunder as he has done.

16.

Bev. But let his private design.

Sav. The Title of his Play, the intrigue which gives it its name, the design of the Author, which every one conversant with the art, saw as soon as the Comedy made its first appearance, all things publickly markt out what he meant by it. Why then does the *Reviser* call it his *private design*, because he did not understand it, at that rate there are a great many important parts of Learning suffering under too much privacy.

61.

Bev. Young Fashion, Lord Foppington, &c. make the principal figure.

Sav. Because they are the most ridiculous; folly must be very taking with the Adversary, that he's so nicely civil to't when 'tis accompany'd with Quality. I thought the men of sense and the fine Gentlemen were always the Principal Figures of a Play. Lord *Plausible*, at his way of commenting, is the chief Character of the *Plain Dealer*; there's none but himself Rt. Hon. 'Tis true, some would be apt
to

to fancy his foppery made him look little, but these are a rude unthinking sort of people, who don't know the difference that is due to Title, and the respects they owe a Coxcomb of Quality.

Bev. As for poor Lovelace, he sinks in P. 130. the fourth Act.

Sav. What then? *Why you may go bi. look,* Sagely reply'd, and in fewer words than he generally makes use of.

Bev. The Vindicator makes a shift to ^{ib.} say, that if the Play had sunk in the fourth Act, it had been better than 'tis by just 20 per Cent. &c. Does not this confession prove the truth of my Remarks, and that Loveless was a Character of Inferiour consideration.

Sav. What in saying, that he wisht the Play had been concluded, when that Character appear'd no more? You must observe always that when Mr Collier asks a Question, 'tis not out of any doubt whether or no he's in the right, he never leaves the Reader at liberty to deny him, and you must understand him every where as in this place, where he means, that *this confession proves the truth of his Remarks,*
when

when it proves the quite contrary. The Author says, all that comes after *Loveless* goes off the Stage, is trivial and insignificant, and he wishes the Play had ended, as soon as *Loveless's* part was over.

16.

Bev. Does the main person use to dye so long before the Epilogue.

Sav. How must we take him here, is he talking of Comedy or Tragedy. The death of the Hero in a Tragedy, ought sure to be immediately before the Curtain drops; but I suppose he only changes the expression, to shew how he can flourish with his Eloquence, and this main person dying so long before, is the same as sinking. If so, there are instances of the main person disappearing in the fourth Act, but they are vitious according the rules of the Drama, and ought not to be follow'd : Tho we have seen one of the best Tragedies of the last age, where the person who employs the greatest part of the Poem, never appears at all, and yet he gives the Play its name, I mean the *Pompey of Corneille*. Supposing, in short, the *Relapser* has in *Loveless's* vanishing, so early err'd in one part
of

of his Conduct, 'tis not an error in the Chief, which is the Moral; and his Virtue ought not to be question'd for his being too free with the principles of his Art.

Bev. And pretends I have ridicul'd¹⁶ the Morality.

Sav. To ridicule was not in his power, he has rail'd at it, and been unfair to the Author, in imposing a Fable and Moral on him, which he disowns with Reason, and there's no *mist* cast before the Readers eyes in this business, but what he conjur'd up himself.

Bev. I was not examining the Mo-¹⁶ral.

not

Sav. I believe he did know what he was about, and I hope I shall convince you that I am not too severe with him, for saying so in page 209 of the *Short View*, he tells you, *he'll spend some more thoughts than ordinary on the Relapse, and examines briefly the Fable, the Moral, and the Characters.* The Fable he says, he takes to be as follows.

Fa-

Fashion, a lewd young Prodigal younger Brother, &c.

He tells you here, he was not examining the Moral, and in his *Short View* he was. He agrees mightily with himself; however, this we'll excuse in him. If that is the Fable of *Virtue in danger*, the Moral of the Play must necessarily rise from it, and be in part what he says it is, how then can he say that he did not examine the Moral, when he lays down what the Fable is so positively. They are inseparable, and he could not talk of one without implying the other. A Play can't have two Actions and two Morals regularly, but some underplots (as we call them) are by many inexperience'd writers spun out to the length of the main action. This Mr *Collier* mistook, as I told you at first, wilfully or ignorantly, and thence very presumptuously affirm'd the Play is miscall'd. This he is now ashamed of, and would disown, but he did examine the Moral in examining the Fable, and to read the Page I have cited, will be enough to satisfy you farther from his own words. *Bev.*

Bev. I say my remarks in this place are only upon the Manners in a Poetick sense.

Sav. If 'twas in a Poetick sense, he P. 131 should have distinguisht between the Fable and the Manners. If he had said the Manners of the *Relapse* were deficient, few would have contradicted him, but he pretended to unravel the Fable, and point out the Moral, which in a Poetick-sense differs something from the manners. The Moral of a Play may be good, when the Manners of part of the Characters are naught.

Bev. Thus it appears the blot he makes so much noise with, lyes in his own Tables.

Sav. You see how it appears so, and who can with patience read him talk proudly of his Victory, where he is so evidently foyl'd, a man with common assurance could not have kept his countenance, when he knows his own guilt, as Mr *Collier* must do here, and yet as if there was no harm done, he drops the argument in haste, and charitably sends the Vindicator away with his blessing, which for my part I will not much value till I hear he

K

is

is more cautious in giving it.
Rev. These Authors endeavour to justify the Theatre from the silence of the Scriptures.

Sav. He is leaving of his Reply to the Vindicator, and comes to attack the Stage in general, by answering a passage or two of those who defended it; till we see something from him more to the purpose, than he has yet writ against those Gentlemen, tho he threatens what he will do, we shall imagin he can do no more; and I believe he will be weary of the dispute as soon as he sees the Book we talkt of some time ago, which confutes him in the sense of Antiquity, and proves his observations on the Plays of the Antient, false and malicious; but whatever he does of this nature farther, he may be sure will be answer'd if 'tis worth it; for the argument will still bear much more to be said for't, than the Poets have yet thought necessary.

Rev. I believe some of those who wrote for the Stage, would have said more if they could; their malice has appear'd in their bitter Language, which

which was accompany'd, without doubt, with the utmost strength of their reasoning, that no where appears extraordinary forcible.

Sav. The Prefaces to the Plays (if I may call them so) that have lately been publisht, have not, I confess, been over serviceable to the cause, yet there are enough who can vindicate the Stage when it shall require their service against Mr Collier, and all opposers.

Bev. For ought I know that may be against the authority of the Nation.

Sav. When that concerns itself in the Controversie, the Vindicators will do their best to satisfy it how far the Enemies of the Theatre are mistaken. But they can't imagin the authority of this Kingdom will be impos'd on by Faction and Prejudice; that were to affront the Justice of a People, whose Arms have brought her in to respect over the whole world, and made those who were her Enemies, pretend most strictly to support her.

Bev. Shall I read the remaining 3 or 4 Pages of the *Defence*.

Sir. What you please, tho you and I may have an opportunity to discourse more of these matters, when I shall endeavour to convince you of the unreasonable-ness of our Zealots in their attempts against the Stage. If you ever observ'd who were most warm against it, you found they were those who knew nothing of the Theatre; and it may be never saw any thing on a Stage, above the Drolls in *Smith-field*, or the pranks of a *Merry-Andrew*, which to be sure they reckon a better Entertainment, than a well-wrought Scene of a Comedy or Tragedy, being indeed more suitable to their capacities. I could tell you of some Gentlemen, who at the expence of their domestick Peace and Interest, would make a Figure in the world, the meanness of whose Education added to their Native ignorance, hardly qualifys 'em to judge of a Mountebanks Bill, and yet these are disgusted with the Drama, which is too sensible a pleasure for their narrow understandings; and people are always angry with what they cannot understand. These are the Enemies of our most reasonable di-

diversion; and Religion is in this, as in all other popular cases, made the Instrument of their Resentment, while to speak truth, their Intellects are more injur'd than their Consciences. Fools and Coxcombs were ever at War with Wit; 'tis their mortal Enemy, and they attack it in its most tender part, when they assault the Theatre. I am loath to look into future things, but I beg you to mind this, that whenever the Controversy with the Stage shall grow universal, the division will not be between the Godly and the Ungodly, but between the men of Sense, and the Fools and Fops. If you resolve to go quite thro with the *Defence*, let's hasten to put it out of our way.

Rev. I am impatient to converse with you on this subject, for I fancy there's a great deal to be said for reforming the Stage, and if that is impracticable for silencing the Actors.

Ser. If there could be no reformation I should agree with you, but I suppose you are not of that opinion: if you are, I'll do what I can to convert you, and I believe I have study'd this Affair more than you have.

K 3

Rev.

to *Bev.* Come, now for the Defence, I'll be as short as possible; and what think you of the silence of the Scriptures, is this a warrant for the continuance of *Comedy*.

Sav. This puts the Theatre on an equal foot with other indifferent things, which are not hurtful in themselves, such as Bowling, moderate Gaming and Drinking, Musick, and other Diversions, which are not injurious to a mans Fortune or Conscience, but by the circumstances that may attend them.

P. 132. *Bev.* Every Foreign sentence is not recommended by the bare mention.

Sav. And why all this Sophistry, if he contradicts his meaning so soon after? Every sentence is not recommended, and who said it was? This is recommended, he owns it himself, *this Verse of Menander's is moral and sententious, and without doubt St Paul cited it to put the Christians upon their Guard.* No body inters from St Paul's use of one Verse, that he approv'd all that *Menander* writ; but 'tis natural to infer from the Apostles consecrating this Verse, by giving it a place in the Gospel,

pel, he approv'd of some things of *Menander's*, and countenanc'd the Comick Writer, by serving himself of his words in the Law he was to deliver to Christians. This is an argument that a Stage may be allow'd in a Christian Country, without offence to their Religion, when 'tis under the regulation that the *Roman Stage* was at first, and ours ought to be at present.

Bev. I affirm that Plays are plainly P. 133.
condemn'd in Scripture, &c.

Sev. They are no more condemn'd, than the immoderate use of any lawful pleasure, or the abuse of the liberties of Conversation. When Plays are guilty of Blasphemy or Lewdness they are forbidden, because Blasphemy and *Smut* (as he's resolv'd to call it) are condemn'd in general; and if a man can't talk without talking lewdly, he is not allow'd to talk at all; however, 'twould be extravagant enough to infer from thence, that talking is a sin. You must remember he said before, he was for *Innocent Diversions*, (speaking of the Stage) and elsewhere, that *singularity*, *cowardice*, &c. might do; and yet here he affirms, that Plays

are plainly condemn'd in Scripture. If so, those Diversions can't be innocent, neither can Cowardice, Singularity, Covetousness, &c. do on the Theatre; and thus he's for Diversions which Scripture condemns. Those parts of Comedy which Holy Writ condemns, are things which are every where unlawful, and their coming from the Stage would not make 'em so, if they had not been so before. He is not long in the same humour, sometimes for a Drama, sometimes for none, but I hope in a little while no body will much matter what he's for, since men of the best sense and best Morals that have writ this age, allow and commend these Entertainments. *La Brujere*, whom we can't quote too often, being a much more valuable Author than *Mr Collier*, or the Bp of *Meaux*, has frequently spoke well of a regulated Stage, and seems to wonder how 'tis possible that so fine a recreation should be made so useless, as 'thas been in the hands of the Modern Poets.

Bev. This is plain enough, Plays are not priviledg'd to speak what is a crime to be spoken elsewhere.

Sav,

11 *Sam.* But when they are innocent, as most of *Corneille's* and *Racine's* Tragedies are, and some of *Moliere's* Comedies, they are as warrantable from the silence of the Scriptures as all other diversions. Innocence, and Decency should be the standard of Comedy and Tragedy, and since there are instances of Tragedies, and Comedies, which have been ~~discreet~~^{decent} and innocent none should argue for their being unlawful, because there are many more which have not kept within those bounds: after this rate there would be nothing in the world which ought not to be condemn'd, since the most sacred things have been abus'd as often as the Theatre. *Mr Collier* has said as much to the purpose as the Bp of *Meaux*, whose authority I take to be little better than his own. *Moliere's* Preface to his *L'Imposteur* is so good an answer to that Prelate, that nothing can be said after it on the subject.

Bev. You lookt it over yesterday, pray read it in *English*, I am not so perfect a Master of the *French*, that I will venture to hear it in the Original, lest I should not understand it thoroughly.

Sav.

S^{ev}. I'll translate it as well as I can, at least I will give you his meaning. Some scrupulous Sparks had got the Archbishop of *Paris* to forbid his Comedy the Stage. *Tartuff* being a Hypocrite, who, to answer the Character, spoke abundance of good things, at the same time that the audience knew him to be a Rascal. This *Moliere* thought allowable, and that he err'd in't no more against his Religion than his Art, but the *Colliers* of those days were not of his opinion, they cry'd aloud against the wickedness of the Author, and prevail'd with the *Good Bishop* to command, that it should not be represented. The case is the same with ours, and the Preface one of the best I ever saw.

'I know very well what these Gentlemen say in answer to this, they insinuate that the Theatre ought not to meddle with such matters. I ask under favor, where they learnt this fine proposition, which they only suppose, and can in no wise prove. On the contrary, it may without question be demonstrated, that the Drama had its rise from Religion, and was

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‘ a part of its Mysteries. The Spaniards
 ‘ our neighbours, seldom celebrate a
 ‘ Festival without some Theatrical re-
 ‘ presentation, and even amongst us
 ‘ we derive its Birth from a Brother-
 ‘ hood, to whom the *Hotel of Burgundy*
 ‘ at present belongs. This place was
 ‘ set a part for representing the impor-
 ‘ tant Mysteries of our Faith; and
 ‘ there are Dramatical pieces now ex-
 ‘ tant, in *Gothick* Characters, written
 ‘ by a Dr of the *Sorbonne*. What need
 ‘ have we to go so far, are not at this
 ‘ time Monsieur *de Corneille’s* Religious
 ‘ Pieces shewn there with universal ap-
 ‘ plause.

‘ If the business of Comedy is to
 ‘ correct the Vices of Mankind, I know
 ‘ no reason why any one should plead
 ‘ privilege. This Vice (*Hypocrisy*)
 ‘ is much more dangerous in its conse-
 ‘ quences than any other, and we have
 ‘ seen the Theatre very successful in re-
 ‘ formation. The most excellent trea-
 ‘ tises of Morality, are often less power-
 ‘ ful than the strokes of Satyr. No-
 ‘ thing reproves the greatest part of
 ‘ Mankind more than painting their
 ‘ defects. Tis a great mortification to
 Vice

‘ Vice to be expos’d to the laughter of
‘ the world. One can easily enough
‘ bear with reproof, but can’t endure
‘ raillery, and most men had rather be
‘ thought wicked than ridiculous. I
‘ am accus’d of putting Phrases of Pie-
‘ ty into the mouth of my Impostor,
‘ and how could I have drawn the
‘ Character of a Hypocrite without it.
‘ ‘Tis enough, I think, that I let the
‘ Audience know the guilty motives
‘ which induc’d him to speak such
‘ things ; and I have forbore other
‘ consecrated terms which I thought e-
‘ very body would not care to hear put
‘ to an ill use. But in the Fourth Act
‘ he delivers a pernicious Moral. Has
‘ not the world heard it often repeated ?
‘ Is there any thing new in my Come-
‘ dy ? And is there any reason to fear
‘ that a thing so universally abhorr’d,
‘ should make an impression on their
‘ minds ? Have I made it dangerous by
‘ bringing it on the Theatre, or given
‘ it an authority by putting it in the
‘ mouth of a Villain. Sure there’s no
‘ likelihood of that, and the Age ought
‘ either to approve the Comedy of *Tar-*
‘ *tuff*, or condemn all Comedies. This
‘ is

‘ is what some persons lately have fu-
‘ riously aim’d at, and the Theatre
‘ was never before so violently attackt:
‘ I can’t deny but several Fathers of the
‘ Church have condemn’d the Stage;
‘ however, it must not be deny’d too
‘ that many of them have handled this
‘ subject more tenderly. By which
‘ means their authority is divided, and
‘ ruin’d by the division. All that can
‘ be drawn from this diversity of opi-
‘ nion in persons inlightned by the
‘ the same Revelation is, that they
‘ have judg’d differently of the Drama.
‘ The one consider’d it in its purity,
‘ the other in its corruption, confound-
‘ ed with those filthy shews, which
‘ were indeed beastly representations.
‘ In short, since we should discourse of
‘ things, and not of words, and the
‘ greatest part of the opposition pro-
‘ ceeds from misunderstanding, we
‘ need only draw the Curtain, and be-
‘ hold the Stage as ’tis in itself, to see
‘ whether ’tis really condemnable,
‘ Without doubt, every one knows that
‘ Comedy is only an ingenious Poem,
‘ which by pleasant Lessons would
‘ correct mens faults. How then can it
‘ be

‘ be censur’d but with injustice ; be-
‘ sides, if we should hear what Anti-
‘ quity says on this subject, we shall
‘ find the most famous Philosophers
‘ have spoke in praise of the Theatre,
‘ even those who profess the severest
‘ wisdom, and were incessantly crying
‘ out against the Vices of the age they
‘ liv’d in. We shall find *Aristotle* em-
‘ ploy’d a great deal of time about the
‘ Drama, and took care to reduce the
‘ method of writing Plays into pre-
‘ cepts of Art. We shall find that the
‘ greatest Heroes, and men of the high-
‘ est Dignity, have thought it glorious
‘ to write them, and some who have not
‘ disdain’d to act in publick what they
‘ compos’d in private. That *Greece* made
‘ the Esteem she had for this Art illu-
‘ strious, by the vast expence and the
‘ Superb Theatres she honour’d it with,
‘ and that the same Art receiv’d after-
‘ wards in *Rome* extraordinary incou-
‘ ragement. I don’t mean in *Rome*,
‘ debauch’d under the liberty of her
‘ Emperors, but *Rome* when strict in
‘ discipline under the wisdom of her
‘ Consuls, and when the *Roman* Virtue
‘ was in its vigour. I own there has
‘ been

‘ been a time when the Drama was
‘ corrupted. And what is there in the
‘ world free from Corruption? There’s
‘ nothing, be it never so innocent,
‘ which men have not made Criminal.
‘ No art so wholesome, whose good
‘ intentions they have not revers’d.
‘ Nothing so good in its self, which
‘ they have not abus’d by putting it
‘ to an ill use. Physick is an useful
‘ Science, and every body reveres it
‘ as one of the most excellent things
‘ we have among us. However, there
‘ was a time when ’twas odious, and
‘ has often been made use of in the Art
‘ of poisoning. Philosophy is a gift
‘ of Heaven: ’Twas given us to raise
‘ our Souls to the knowledge of a God,
‘ by contemplating what is wonderful
‘ in nature. Yet we are not ignorant
‘ that it has frequently been put to o-
‘ ther uses, and publickly employ’d in
‘ supporting Impiety, even the most
‘ holy things have not escap’d humane
‘ corruption. We see Villains every
‘ day abusing Piety, and making it a
‘ means to bring about their wicked
‘ designs; but we can distinguish as we
‘ ought the men from their Profession.
‘ We

' We don't mingle in a false conse-
 ' quence, the goodness of the thing
 ' corrupted, with the malice of the
 ' Corrupter. We separate always the
 ' ill use from the intentions of an Art,
 ' and as we don't think fit to forbid
 ' Phyfick, because 'twas once banish'd
 ' from *Rome* nor Philosophy, for being
 ' publicly condemn'd in *Athens*, so we
 ' should not condemn the Stage, be-
 ' cause 'twas censur'd at a certain
 ' time; there were reasons for that cen-
 ' sure, which have no foundation now.
 ' I know there are some men of sense,
 ' (*continues he a little farther*) who are
 ' so nice, that they can't suffer any Plays
 ' whatever, who say, that those which
 ' are most honest are most dangerous,
 ' that the passions the Poets paint are the
 ' more hurtful, the more virtuous they
 ' appear, and that the Soul is too much
 ' softned by such Representations. I
 ' don't see where's the harm, if a man
 ' is softned at the sight of an honest
 ' passion. I own the degree of Virtue
 ' to which they would mount us by
 ' their extraordinary insensibility, is ve-
 ' ry exalted, but I question if Humane
 ' Nature in her own strength is capa-
 ' ble

'ble of such perfection; and if 'tis not
'better to endeavour to rectify and
'sweeten humane passions, than quite
'extirpate them. I allow there are
'places which persons should choose
'rather to frequent than the Theatre;
'and if every thing is blameable which
'does not directly relate to God and
'our Salvation, Plays certainly ought
'not to be suffer'd, nor would we be
'sorry to see them condemn'd with the
'rest. But supposing (what is certain-
'ly true) that Religious Exercises
'should have some intervals, and men
'want recreation, I maintain none can
'be made more innocent than Co-
'medy.

Ben. What says he afterwards?

Sav. Only a jest of the Prince of
Conde's to the King on his Play.

Ben. Let us have it.

Sav. 'Eight days after his *L' Impos-*
'*seur* was forbidden, a Piece was pre-
'sented the Court call'd *Scaramouch the*
'*Hermit*. The King going out, said to
'the Prince, I would fain know why
'the men who are so scandaliz'd at
'*Moliere's* Comedy, have not a word
'to say against this of *Scaramouch*.

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'The

‘The Prince reply’d, the reason is the
 ‘Comedy of *Scaramouch* plays with
 ‘Heaven and Religion, for which
 ‘these Gentlemen are little concern’d,
 ‘but *Moliere*’s plays on themselves, and
 ‘that they can by no means allow.

Bev. Monsieur de Meaux should
 have had this Preface before him when
 he set himself to write against the
 Stage. He has business enough on his
 hands with the Bishop of *Cambray*, per-
 haps that Controversy exhausted all
 his fine reasoning, ’tis well for the
 Theatre he was not at leisure to deal
 with it more severely.

Sav. I never could have an extraor-
 dinary opinion of men, who are so
 extremely charitable to Hypocrisy, as
 Mr *Collier* is, and the *French Devotee*’s
 were in *Moliere*’s time. I am apt to
 suspect they speak in their own cause,
 and are not so favourable to Hypo-
 crites, but for the resemblance there is
 between them.

Sav. He tells us he has at present some
 business, or he would go on with Mr
Dennis.

Sav. I would be glad to know if
 this Gentleman did not leave it to o-
 thers

them to answer Mr. Dennis, who he thinks has it more in their power to hurt him, I should suspect he has been busie about *Westminster-hall* and given in his Informations, but that I know he has an aversion to our Courts of Justice. The adversary must excuse me for putting him in mind so frequently of a publick misfortune which once befel him : It does not at first sight look generous to play upon a mans unhappiness ; but while he seems to value himself on his error, and insults the Age as if he had nothing to answer for ; while he exclaims so much against those who have always defended the Government to the utmost of their power, and whose Wit has been ever severe with its enemies, one may lawfully remember the World who this man is. I'm sure he has not made himself an enemy, by affronting the Theatre, who wou'd not serve the King and Kingdom with every thing which depends on him ; and 'tis hard that a man who is the Poets enemy because they are friends to the Government, shou'd be suffer'd to triumph over them, as he does in all places where his merit

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is

is not known. And now we'll dismiss Mr Collier, where he does his Reader; I shall be glad if you think he has as much reason to rejoyce that he has done with us, as we have that we have done with him.

Bev. I find there are a great many errors in his Books, and you have shewn me several places where his stile is not so beautiful as I once thought it.

Sav. I always hated to cavil about words, and could have objected against them oftner than I have, if I was not asham'd of fighting with the wind. You might have been more merry with his affectation and pretences to Politeness, but that I am not of the opinion he says the Poets are, *that laughing and pleasure has an unlimited prerogative*; which for the Grammar of the Sentence I thought fit to make use of, and yet this fault is so obvious, that a School-boy would not have slip't it in three Editions of a Book. Other such mistakes I could have troubled you with, had not we found greater in this argument.

Short
View, P.
159.

Bev.

Bev. Yet to do both of you Justice, I think still the man has Wit, and you have Right of your side, what startled me most was, to find you were so close on him in those things which one would have thought he must have understood, and that you had the best of the Argument in matters of Religion.

Sav. You need not be surpriz'd at this, 'tis easie to perceive how Mr *Collier* spends his time in his Closet. His Language, as bad as 'tis, is copy'd from our Plays; he imitates the brisk turn of their Repartees in his Sentences, and their Wit in his Similies, but imitates them so awkwardly, that at first sight 'tis impossible to guess his Originals. I believe he has read as many Plays as Sermons, and has study'd Father *Hedelin*, *River's*, *Aristotle*, and his Views of Tragedy, Mr *Dryden's* Prefaces, and his Essay on Dramatick Poetry, as much as the Fathers or their Successors. But no more of Mr *Collier*. I see 'tis near Twelve, and I fancy you are prepar'd for your Dinner, if the *Defence* has not spoilt your Stomach.

Bev. No fear of that, Sir, you will find I don't take the matter so much to

heart, tho I would indeed never live long in an error.

Sav. If so, you must not long be govern'd by Report; Fame is as whimsical as Fortune, in the favours she bestows on her Votaries. Our Adversary is an Example of this; but she serves them generally as Fortune serves her favourites; she sets them down where she takes 'em up, which must certainly be very pleasant to those that know what the men were, and what they deserv'd in their intervals of reputation.

Bev. You go with me to the Play?

Sav. I have past my word, and I expect a friend after Dinner, who I'll engage shall give us his Company, you will be pleas'd with his humour and worth. I'll assure you he has no opinion of Mr Collier, for either of those Qualities, tho he's the best natur'd man, and a man of as good sense as any I know.

Bev. His name.

Sav. You shall see him, and you will then be of of the same mind. Come, Sir, we are expected.

Bev.

Bev. I see we had not a minute to spare.

Sav. I shew you the way.

The end of the third Dialogue.

The Fourth Dialogue.

Bevill, Savage, and Beaumont,

Sav. **T**Is but three by my Watch, we shall be early enough for the Play two hours hence, after a run of eight days we need not fear being too much crowded.

Bev. You shall direct me; and I am the more willing to sit with you till then, that we may make an end of the argument we engag'd in.

Sav. The Stage, I warrant ye, has been the subject of most of the Conversation of the Town for this last six months. The sage people in the City Coffee-Houses have laid by their Politics, to consider how to pull down the Theatres, and the very News-mon-

gers have taken up the dispute.

Bev. How so, Sir, I hear of nothing publish'd against the Play-house lately, but Mr Collier's Books, and the *Stage Condemn'd*.

Sav. Which they say was done by the Writer of the *Flying-Post*, and by the resemblance there is in the stile of that Paper, and the Book we mention'd, I am am apt to believe it.

Sav. Have you read it?

Beau. I should not have ask'd you such a Question; if you have seen it you may satisfy your self, I am not so over inquisitive, as to give my self the fatigue of reading so many impertinent Sheets, especially after I had been inform'd who wrote them. I knew the Character of the Spark before, and was sure 'tis not in his power to do any thing useful or agreeable.

Sav. I know him, and tho I never heard till now that 'twas he who gave us the *Stage Condemn'd*, yet I can almost be positive you are in the right. I read 20 or 30 pages of his Book, but his wretched Arguments, pitiful Stile, and ill Manners, tir'd me before I got half over 'em. His affronting the
Church

Church of *England* in her Ministers, and abusing the Education of our Universities, discover plain enough that this Author must be some Fellow or another born on the other side of the *Tweed*.

Bev. You are very free with him; however, there are a great many who think well of the Book, let who will write it.

Sav. I have not met with one so intolerably in the wrong, as to have the least favour for this Republican Letter Writer, and if you expect I should answer what he has said, or any part on't, you must excuse me for disappointing you.

Bev. No, Sir, I never expected it from you, we can spend our time better, I despise his performance, as much as you can, and could my self confound him.

Beau. Hold there, a person of his Forehead is not easily confounded.

Sav. That's to be seen by his Writings.

Bev. Well Gentlemen, to have done with the News-monger, what think you after all that Mr *Collier* has said,

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is there no necessity of a Reformation in the Stage, must the Play-wrights be suffer'd to go on with their abuse of Magistracy, Morals and Religion, and tho Mr *Collier* may have err'd in several things, is he not in the right in the main?

Beau. I can't tell that, and am loath to give my opinion of reforming the Drama, till I am sure the world will be satisfy'd with that: Whatever errors our Comick Writers have been guilty of, their Enemies have not yet hit on 'em, at least on any of the most material. 'Tis not in their power to ruin 'em but by noise and force, and those who love their pleasure as well as I, are in the wrong to give their Enemies any advantages over 'em, or put weapons in their hands to hurt them. If the Stage ought to be corrected, the men of sense can only put us in a way, and they will not set about it while there are such powerful Parties declaring for no Plays at all.

Bev. I am not one of 'em, and should be glad to see some method propos'd to keep up both Houses, without endangering the virtue of their Audiences,

ences, and I love their Entertainments too well to be willing to part with 'em, if they can be maintain'd without offence to Manners or Conscience.

Bean. Which certainly they may, none ever doubted the contrary, that was able to judge in this Affair, and those who attack this sort of Poetry, will afterwards find exceptions against the Muses in general. Musick will next offend 'em, and every one that has not a good ear or a tolerable judgment in the art, will cry out against the danger of Fiddles and Haut-boys.

Bev. That will be severe indeed.

Bean. I think the other is much more so. Musick affords all its admirers a wonderful delight, when they are truly touch'd with it; yet this delight goes no farther than an amusement for the present. Whereas at a Dramatical Representation the passions are wrought up so forcibly, and the Images appear so lively, that the Impressions stick on the Audience, and may be advantageous to them in their Conduct in the world. 'Tis strange, the Sages are so angry with the Theatre; are not there
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an hundred other Diversions more prejudicial to a mans health and fortune? No body attempts to shut up our Tavern doors, and yet without all manner of dispute, they give occasion to much more Extravagance, Immorality, and Debauchery, than the Play-houses are charg'd with. The Stage aims at bringing men to their sense, the Taverns assist them to lose the little Reason they have; and yet they are so necessary in Commerce and Society, that 'twould be monstrous to talk of prohibiting Wine, because some Scow-rers have been hang'd for their drunken frolicks. Besides, a Bottle is a leveller, a Blockhead can drink as much as a man of Wit, and in most of those conversations, if there is any more respect paid to one than another, he that carries off most Claret is the greatest man. The *Wise and Great* are sometimes refresh'd, and can debauch in the Taverns without scandal, but at the Theatre they would be soon discover'd, and when they are there, they are not treated so tenderly as to engage their good word. Gaming, which has ruin'd a thousand Families of the best
Ex-

Extraction, made great numbers of Gentlemen Beggars, and tempted so many of the fair to very odd excesses to support themselves under their ill fortune, is a Vice which every one rails at, but no body attempts to get rid on't.

Sav. The Gamesters are an easie, complaisant sort of people, they reflect on the understandings of no man, and let others Intellects alone as long as their own are spar'd. But your Wits are a malicious Generation, they won't forgive a man his foppery, nor let a Fool impose himself any where for a Wit. They attack the Coxcombs where-ever they meet them, and fall foul on the Capacities of some, who are thought extraordinary men in the Companies they frequent. The Fools, and Knaves, Fops, and Hypocrites are by much the majority, no wonder then if men of sense and honour find a multitude to oppose them.

Bev. But they are the honest men and men of Conscience, who set themselves against the Play-house; who are of the opinion that Plays are the great instruments of Debauching youth.

Mr

Mr Collier has awaken'd their zeal, and the dispute is now whether they have reason.

Beau. I don't think that an honest and a sensible man can imagin so ridiculous a thing, as that the Theatres are the Nurseries of Immorality, any more than other Houses set apart for pleasure. All our pleasures have been of late corrupted, even those that were design'd to cure us of our Vices and Follies. This proceeds from the licentiousness of the Age, and whence that proceeded, any who are acquainted with the Liberty of the *Restoration* can inform you.

Bev. Well, since you own all our pleasures are corrupted, you allow the Theatre to be guilty with the rest: why then should it not be put down. You will not pretend to have it kept up, because there are other places of Recreation as dangerous, nor plead the looseness of our other diversions to vindicate this.

Beau. No, Sir, but I must observe thence, that 'tis very odd for men to fall on a pleasure which may be made useful, and at the same time let others remain unattackt, which can never be

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render'd any thing more than agreeable to put a profitable and pleasant thing quite down, because 'thas done some mischief, argues want of thought in those who pretend to't. As if there was no way of preventing the ill consequence of the Stage, but by forbidding all Theatrical representations.

Sav. I don't question but the very wise, and very zealous people, who declare against the Drama, have those sentiments, and believe the only way to reform 'em is to silence the Poets.

Bean. They may believe what they will, zeal more than once has carry'd those very wise people to judge of things above their reach. I have known a bigotted *Cavalier* ridicul'd by a Father of the Church, for his forwardness to correct the Age, by ways that would destroy it. If mens Reason and Religion don't go together, I shall not value what they pretend to in either.

Sav. 'Tis pleasant to hear some grave Sparks rail at the Stage, and condemn all that speak for't, when if you ask them seriously, they shall own, they never read the arguments on either side,

side, nor saw a Play in their lives.

Bev. Granting the men who oppose the Theatre are as great Blockheads as their Adversaries would make 'em, Fools have sometimes been in the right, and 'tis no matter if their fear of Satyr, or their Charity to the Age is the cause of their aversion, provided their pretences are well grounded.

Beau. This Gentleman sticks very close to us, he'll not have the argument thrown off; he brings us to our Text, when we have a mind to ramble. 'Tis not that we cannot defend the proposition we laid down, that a Stage is useful, but for my part I am't extremely fond to answer objections, which rather deserve to be despis'd, and to take notice of them is to do 'em too much honour. I would not that you should fancy, Sir, I reflect on what you have said, I'm sure you speak other mens sentiments, and not your own.

Sav. My friend is of our opinion, but his acquaintance are all against him; he does not study these things very often, and talks of 'em now that he may know the better how to vindicate

cate the Stage in the Company he keeps.

Ben. I shall be ready to give him all the satisfaction I can, but the Gentlemans own reason will save us the trouble of a long argument, which I should be loath to enter upon more for his own sake than ours.

Ben. You'll excuse me that, I desire you to continue this discourse. You have heard what makes me so curious in this Affair, and I may by your assistance save myself from a great deal of impertinence for the future.

Sav. Tho I am convinc'd that a Drama is or may be rendred profitable as well as pleasant, and that ours, as faulty as 'tis, has not been instrumental in debauching the Age, as much as Gaming-Houses and Taverns, yet I confess it wants a reformation; however, I have not seen any thing offer'd towards it, either reasonable or practicable. Some are for settling Supervisors over the Theatre, and in this they have not been over judicious in their choice. If a man of no relish in Poetry has a power given him to cut and mangle the Plays that are brought to

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him at his pleasure, this might do the Gentlemens business who are for no Theatrical Representations; for the Audience would be soon disgusted with such dismembred pieces, and the Poets asham'd to own 'em. Such a Critick would be most severe on what he least understood, and the Beauties of a Play might suffer thro his ignorance.

Bev. He should take cognizance of nothing but Profaneness, Immorality and Indecency.

Bean. There are many persons to be found, who would be severe enough with the appearance of Evil, if there was a good Pension settled on 'em to encourage their Virtue: But I'm afraid our new Officer would in time be less important in this case, than the person, who by his place is to examine all Comedies and Tragedies, and leave out of any of 'em what he finds Profane, Immoral or Indecent.

Bev. Has any one at present that power?

Bean. There's never a Play acted, which is not licenc'd by his Majestys Commission; and the same Commission regulated as it ought, is as sufficient to bring

bring the Stage to order, as a new one would be ; and every Poet will much rather submit to the decision of the Master of the Revels, than the humour of an Author, who, because he can Rhime an Ode or an Elegy, shall think himself qualify'd to Govern the Drama, and judge arbitrarily of things above his capacity. Besides, such a Director would soon be weary of his Post, he must deal with a people who will not part with a tittle of their Writings without very good reason, which you will imagin when you hear that one of them has offer'd a Finger for half a Page, and a Limb for a whole one, and a man may not be willing or able at all times to give a reason for his Criticism. He would then be expos'd to the malice of those who know how to revenge themselves on all, that thro ignorance or obstinacy oppress them.

Bev. I am told, one of considerable rank in *Parnassus* has offer'd his service.

Bean. Any one who has suffer'd from the Theatre, and every one suffers that has not succeeded there when he has attempted it, is not a proper person to

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be set over it. He comes to his Government, resolv'd to treat it as a thing which has affronted him, and 'twill be hard for the Poets to have their Enemy for their Judge. Let those be Masters of the Stage, whose right it always was to command it, and to whom 'tis natural for the Authors to submit. If they have spar'd 'em too much, their own Masters may caution 'em to the contrary, who, with a little care, may reform our dramatical representations, easier and sooner than any new managers.

Bev. They take no notice of the ill things in our Comedies, since Mr *Collier* came out. We have seen as lewd a Farce as ever was acted at the Playhouse suffer'd to be represented there.

Sav. I know what you mean; 'twas lewd and silly enough o' conscience, but I have been inform'd by some of the House, that 'twas Clandestinely brought on, and the Character of the Play little known, even to those who took it; however, the mischief it did, was not great, and it had much ado to keep up 3 or 4 days.

Bean.

Beau. I hope all such pieces will meet with such treatment. The fault is more in the Poets understanding than their Morals, and their Audiences are more defective in their taste of Wit, than their approbation of Vice. When the Town shall not be pleas'd with extravagant thoughts, irregular scenes, incoherent metaphors, wild rants, monstrous characters, unnatural images, insipid as well as brutal humours, Vice, Immorality, and Profaneness, will appear no more at the Theatre. When the senseless Ballads of one Writer, the impertinent brisk Dialogues of another, the insufferable Fustian of a third, the *Alsatian* Conversation, and mean rakelly sentiments of a fourth, the confus'd independent scenes of this author, the grimace and postures of that shall be hift off the Stage, Mr *Collier's smut*, ill manners, and irreligion, will vanish: Then good Sense, true Wit, fine Humour, delicate Rallery, and polite Conversation, will supply their place: Then Fools will be expos'd to be laught at, and not to be imitated: Hypocrites will appear in odious colours, to adorn the Character

of truly Religious, and sincere Christians, and Knaves will make on the Stage no better figure than they do at the Bar. 'Tis a difficult task for the Poets to take their pictures from nature, and yet to give 'em a turn that may at once delight and instruct. The Writers of Farce could never reach this: they have all along been clapt for their wry mouths and apish Gestures. Their Audiences have laugh't at their folly, they mistook it for liking their Characters, and this they have call'd *pleasing and taking*. Perhaps the upper Gallery has lik'd their pictures, for *Hemskirk's* with the Mob, are preferable to *Raphaels* or *Titians*, but 'tis preposterous for the people of sense and condition to be directed by the crowd in their taste of Wit, or their favours on the Stage Writers. The multitude may at first not agree with the men of sense, but tho the majority be for a time against them, 'tis their prerogative to rule, and their superiour reason gives them a priviledge to direct the publick relish in these matters, with whom the Multitude will in the end certainly fall in. If the best part of the Town would

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Reflexions on the Stage.

no longer encourage illiterate Writers, but take some care that they may be silenc'd and not starv'd, the men of Wit would then be proud to please them. Emulation, the Mother of the most excellent productions, would bring forth many more pleasant and instructive things than we can expect, while Whim and Ribaldry are applauded, and those who write for the Theatre keep such bad Company. This is certain, no Poet ever err'd against Manners or Religion, but 'twas at the expence of his Art; those who know nothing of it can't help erring, for which reason they are not to be endur'd. But the Masters of the Science will observe its precepts which ~~them~~ confine, never to please, but in order to instruct. A Reformation in this is necessary, which time only must accomplish, for mens understandings are not like their actions, subject to Laws, nor any other discipline than Reproof and Satyr. The Farce-makers are in a fair way to impose on the Town no longer. There are more good Judges in Poetry and Musick now than there ever were in *England*. Wit declines in all the Southern Nations of

Europe, where it flourish'd long before it came to any perfection with us. The Dramatick pieces which are represented on Foreign Theatres, will hardly even at *Paris* get credit with the Press. And 'twould be Northern policy to forbid an Art which we possess almost in perfection, at least in a wonderful degree above our Neighbours, tho they are by their Climates born to excel us. I have told you what I think of the Stage, and if Mr *Collier* can help to correct its errors on these accounts, I'll answer for t, that he shall have no reason to complain on any other.

Sen. I had an opportunity to speak something on this yesterday, and I was absolutely of your opinion, that 'tis only those whose Wit is as scandalous to the Stage as their Manners, who promote the disorders we find in our Drama. 'Tis true, some men of better sense have descended to follow them in many things, which the madness of Pit, Box, and Gallery has giv'n success to. But these Gentlemen have blusht at their own good Fortune, and been asham'd to be applauded on those terms; applause is yet so charming,
that

that there are few who would not please on any. The Rants and things which have been out of nature in our best Plays, are those places which are most clapt, the caprice of the Audience has put the Poets on seeking for variety to the disadvantage of their Art, and taking a liberty unknown to *Aristotle* or *Horace* their Masters. Good Wits will be glad to find the Town inclinable to be diverted regularly, 'tis as easie for them to give their Audience an inoffensive Entertainment as the contrary. My Lord *Ruscombau* has laid it down for a Maxim in Poetry, that

Want of decency is want of sense.

And none will presume to affirm that any thing spoken against Religion is not indecent. The burlesquing Scripture and ridiculing sacred things, swearing, wanton actions and expressions; and most of Mr. *Collier's* exceptions against our Plays, fall under this Charge. They are all the height of indecency where the objections are just, and when the evil is wrapt up in a double meaning, the hurt is the more dangerous;

ous ; wherefore *Montaign* is for being plain in all cases, the finess of the turn, makes the Ladies sometimes listen to a passage, which had otherwise frightened 'em, and they had startled at its being nam'd ; but a Pill is nevertheless nauseous for being gilded, it only qualifies its appearance, and makes it the easier to be swallow'd. I don't say thus much to insinuate my self into the favor of Mr *Collier* or his Advocates. I am not the first that made this discovery, neither is the honour of finding out the liberty of the Stage Writers, to be attributed to the Author of the *Short View*. Many hundreds had in common conversation said more to the purpose before he *broke silence*, only they had not given themselves the trouble to put their thoughts into such pert Sentences, and divided 'em] into Chapters ; neither did they think it necessary to accuse the Stage or its authors, of Crimes which they are not guilty of, as he has done. They charg'd some things on the folly of the Poets, and some things on the licentiousness of the Age. The Poets ever follow'd the humour of the times. In this they have been

too

too faulty. They ought to observe in what that humour is irregular, and correct it, wherein our Comedies, as bad as they are, have in some measure been serviceable. The Age was running mad after the foppery of the *French Court*, which made abundance of young Fellows study how to outvie one another in tawdry and vanity. Fops have been the continual sport of the Theatre, and the name of *Beau*, which was once us'd as a Title of honour, is enough now to draw the Sparks Sword out of its Scabbard, as willing as it may be to stay there. Manners have been much better'd in this point, by the tricks those Monkeys in the form of men have play'd on the Stage. Affectation, the ruin of the best endowments, has grown out of fashion, and nature been made the standard of our words and actions. There is nothing more scandalous, than to stand out against this reproof, and we can hardly meet with a Coxcomb daring enough to play his fools part in publick, since his Coat has been so plentifully colour'd by the Poets red and yellow. The Grave Sages who are wedded

ded to their Bands and Trunk-breeches, are as little oblig'd to 'em as the *Beane*, but they think a Reformation in Cloaths of no great consequence, and so perhaps will most who shall hear this argument. It will seem trivial at first, but when we consider of what importance the most wise and most potent States have thought irregularity in dress, what Edicts were publisht by the *Spartan* and *Roman* Commonwealths; how many Judgments have been denounc'd in Scripture against wanton or superfluous habits; and how many Sermons in all Languages have been preach't on this subject, we shall not have so little opinion of the good our Comedies do in this particular, as some men may fancy; they have brought us to a decency in apparel, which, without it, I believe could have hardly been accomplish'd by the severity of a Law: For this has made us willing to appear like men. We have seen, and been convinc'd, of the weakness of the *French* in valuing themselves on their Ribbons and Feathers, and by common consent are reduc'd to the most modest habit in the world; so much might be said

said, and a great deal more for the present Stage. But since 'tis requisite, it should be regulated, and easie to effect it, we'll not think of pretending to keep it on its present establishment, unless it could not be brought into better order, which is both feasible and convenient. I must confess I had rather have this Stage than none at all; for I am in hopes that ill Plays and ill Writers will be put out of countenance more and more every day, especially if the Author of *Love for Love*, who is giving the world a new Comedy, shall continue to write, or some other great Genius take up the Quarrel with Vice and Folly.

Bev. I preceive you lay the stress of the argument on the ignorance of the the Writers, and not the lewdness of the Stage.

Bean. Most certainly. So much has been said by the best Pens, in vindicating this kind of Poetry, which *Aristotle* prefers to Heroicks, that 'twould be infamous to question whether Comedy or Tragedy are hurtful in themselves. I can remember the definition of a great Critick of both Tragedy and Comedy

dy. ' Tragedy, he says, rectifies the
 ' use of the passions, by moderating
 ' Terroure and Pity, which are ob-
 ' stacles to Virtue. It teaches mankind
 ' that Vice never goes unpunish'd; in
 ' representing a wicked man, such as
 ' *Egistheus in the Electra of Sophocles*,
 ' punish'd for his Crimes, after he had
 ' for several years glory'd in his wick-
 ' edness. It shews us, that the favours
 ' of Fortune, and worldly Grandeur,
 ' are not real blessings, when we see
 ' an unfortunate Queen, like the *Hecu-
 ' ba of Euripides*, lamenting her Condition
 ' in the most mournful accents. Comé-
 ' dy, which is the image of common
 ' Conversation, corrects publick defects,
 ' by shewing the ridiculoufness of pri-
 ' vate. *Aristophanes in his Harranguers*,
 ' was merry with the foolish vanity of
 ' *Praxagora*, only to cure other wo-
 ' men of their vanity; and *Plautus* had
 ' no other design in exposing the false
 ' bravery of a Braggo-docio, in his *Glo-
 ' rious Soldier*, but to let the Roman
 ' Soldiers see in what true Valour con-
 ' sisted. Thus says our Author, and
 let any one judge then if the Drama is
 dangerous in it self: There can be no
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pretence that the Plays of the Ancients were more instructive than ours, at least I'm sure their Comedies were not; and the best of 'em to be represented on our Stage, would make but an insipid entertainment. The Ancients, particularly *Aristotle*, have left very few reflections on Comedy, either they did not admire that sort of writing so much as we do, or else the Ridiculous was not brought to such perfection as the Modern *Italians*, *Spaniards*, and *French* have given it, and the *English* much more than either of 'em, or the *Latin* Comick Poets. If our Authors are excell'd by *Plautus* and *Terence* in some things, they have the advantage of 'em in more Humour which was in a great degree unknown to the *Roman* Writers, is the peculiar Talent of the *English*, and this is the most agreeable, and perhaps the most useful part of Comedy. Yet tho the *Latins* were unacquainted with this their notion of Comedy was quite different from the wise men of these times. *Comedia multum profuit civitati: cum caveret unusquisque Culpam, ne spectaculo ceteris esset*

de domestica probus, says Donatus, who had never seen any thing comparable to our *Plain Dealer*, a much better Play than was ever presented to the people of *Rome*; and whoever reads it, and understands what he reads, must confess that there are more good sense, useful Satyr, and pleasantry in that Comedy, than in any of the Ancients, or perhaps in any one Book that has been publish'd in *Europe* since the restoration of Wit and Learning, *Rapin* in his *Reflections on Poetry* owns, that Tragedy seems to be our Talent, but gives those reasons for't, that discover plainly, he knew little of our Language or Genius, which one may venture to affirm, are much more adapted to the sublime than the *French*, and the Pathetick of our Tragedies, where the passions have been well mov'd, is much above what they can boast of. Yet 'tis not Terror only in which we excel 'em, and we are not too hard for them there, because, as he insinuates, we are *Insularians*, and a people fond of Slaughter and Cruelty, but from the greatness of our Minds and excellence of our Reason; and this I hope I may say

say without being accus'd of complementing my Nation when we don't deserve it. All that are conversant with Mr Dryden's *All for Love*, and *Oedipus*. Shakespear's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and part of Lee's *Lucius Junius Brutus*, know that I am not guilty of the least flattery, and that they can't give an instance of one Play in *French* even of *Corneille's*, where the passion of Terror is better touch'd, than in these Authors. The *French* fancy they are particularly happy in moving Pity in their Tragedies, yet this passion has appear'd on our Stage as lively, as ever *Racine* brought it on theirs. *Otway's Venice Preserv'd*, and *Orphan*, part of Lee's *Brutus*, some scenes of Mr Southern's *Fatal Marriage*, and part of the *Mourning Bride*, are examples of as penetrating tenderness as any we can find in the *Berenice* or *Bajazet*, or, in short, in the best of *Racine's* pieces, who is most excellent when he is touching that passion. You will not think this vindication of our Poets, against the malice or ignorance of our Enemies foreign to our subject, 'twill in some degree give weight to the argument. For if we

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show the advantage of our Neighbours
in things on which they value them-
selves most, it would be great weakness
to discourage an Art, which may in
a time contribute to ^{our} Glory.

Beo. If the Art is not dangerous, as
you have gone a great way in proving,
I should be sorry to see the Poets baulkt,
or their Science suffer under scandal,
when it may enlarge our Reputation for
Wit, which we have not till now been
much renown'd for.

Bea. The Author of the Letter to
Mr Congreve, who, if 'tis not Mr Collier,
is to be sure Mr Collier's bosom friend,
and one of his own Coat, allows, that
if the Stage would have nothing to say to
the Clergy, and their Cause, he would
think it no unjustifiable diversion, And
adds, that a celebrated Female has lately
convinc'd the world in her Fatal Friendship,
that 'tis possible to entertain with all the
judgment, wit and beauty of Poetry, with-
out shocking ourselves with intollerable pro-
faneity and obscenity. This from the
mouth of an Adversary is great conde-
scension; for whoever wrote that Let-
ter, 'twas done by the approbation o
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the *Short View*, as without doubt he recommended it to his Bookseller, not that any one need value themselves on the honour of being the Author on't, and his approving such a Writer, is another proof of his Judgment in polite Learning. This Gentleman tells Mr *Congreve*, 'twas not generous to insult on his Adversaries misfortune, at the same time that in two or three pages he shews his good will to do as much by him in his impotent raillery on the presentment of the Quarter Sessions; however, nobody takes his reflexions to touch any ones reputation so much as the Presenters, which I hope may be said without danger of a *presumpture*. He adds, that tho' Mr *Collier* might have been liberal of his Absolutions, the Stage and those who write for't are like to go without them. He should not have deny'd the Poets that favour till they had askt it, and might very well have spar'd himself that opportunity of shewing his ill nature.

Sav. I never saw this pamphlet, but I perceive 'tis a merry one: Pray is there nothing more in't as extraordinary?

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Beau.

Beau. Yes, he says, he could never meet with a Dramatick Poet that cou'd write good Prose.

Sev. That's extremely new and surprizing, I thought every one allow'd the Stage to be always a promoter of Eloquence.

Beau. You must excuse him, Language is out of his way, and Mr *Collier* wants help too much himself to be able to assist another in his Style. What thinks this Gentleman of Mr *Dryden*, Mr *Waller*, Mr *Otway*, Mr *Tate*, Mr *Dennis*, or indeed of most that have written for the Stage. Those who have not succeeded for their wit and humour, have yet been happier in their Language, than the best of other Writers, whose profession requires them to be Eloquent (three or four excepted.) The Play-writers have publish'd very few things in Prose besides their Plays, and I hope Dialogism is not a fault there. What they have done has not been excell'd by the most famous Essays, written by Mr *Collier*, or his admirers, and I might drive this argument farther, but they'll tell me 'tis design'd to affront the whole Clergy, whom I shall

Reflections on the Stage.
shall not reverence the less, because the
greatest part of 'em are not eminent
for the Beauties of their Stile.

Bis. Have you seen the Bishop of
Meaux's Book against the Stage?

Hen. I read it almost thro lately,
and the Prelate has shewn more Piety
than Reason in his controversy. A
man that shall condemn Marriage be-
cause 'tis the end of an obscene passion,
must be very nice in all things which
relate to Love: And 'twould be in vain to
attempt vindicating the most innocent
pleasures with persons so over-scrupu-
lous as this Bishop, or those whose zeal
is as celestial as *Tertullian's*: Who says
we ought not to go to the Theatre, be-
cause the same hands are lifted up there
to applaud an Actor, which we lift up
to Heaven in our Devotion. These are
extraordinary examples of Vertue; they
think their abstinence will be serviceable
to 'em hereafter, and make their good
works the ground of their hopes. I
shall not give my self the trouble to
convert any persons whose Consciences
are so squeamish, 'twill be best for all
that dare not think of Matrimony
without blushing, nor clap what they

like in an Actor, or any other publick performance of Musick and Dancing, for fear of profaning their Fingers, to avoid the least temptation of coming within the Play-house doors.

Bev. There's not much in these objections. If the Bishop and the Father have none more to the purpose I think the Stage justifiable against either of 'em.

Beau. You can't expect any thing from persons who reason so oddly. This is some of the zeal which is without foundation, and which is more dangerous than the liberty of the Theatre, as it ought to be improv'd. There are several other exceptions in the Father and the Bishop, but I did not think 'em weighty enough to remember 'em, and you have them almost all in Mr Collier's Books.

Bev. Where we have found 'em of very little consequence, perhaps 'twas because they were set with his; a good thing as well as a good man, may be spoilt by ill Company.

Beau. Mr Collier has said nothing of his own, but what is more forcible than either the Bishop of *Meaux* or *Tersillian*, and if you are convinc'd that
what

what he has alledg'd has been answer'd by those who have examin'd him. you need not be at any pains to read either the one or the other, for the names are the most powerful things you'll meet with.

Bea. You would not leave the Theatre on its present foot, without any amendments.

Bea. I am very willing it should be amended, provided the Alterations will not shake its foundation. I believe it may be put into a good method by those who have the care on't. If their Masters observe them more curiously for the future. Any other project for their regulation will be as fatal to 'em, as projects are generally to the Affairs of the publick, good for nothing but to put things into confusion. I am told the men ought to sit in one place and the women in another, that no woman should dare to appear at the Playhouse with a Mask on, that a part of their profits should go to the poor, and that a Box should be set up there as in the French Churches. The Actors should live like Monks under the discipline of a Governour, and the Actresses

with thro' Grates like so many Sisters,
 and that it should be criminal in them
 to speak to any out of their Cue. These
 are fair notions, and become the sancti-
 ty of those Reformers who can find
 fault, but make more in amending 'em.
 When our Plays are better writ, the
 people of both Sexes will find little
 time for their intrigues. Ill women
 won't have patience to do penance
 three hours, for the sake of picking up
 a Cully. They'll not endure to see
 themselves represented as odious as their
 Characters are in themselves, nor suffer
 the lash of true Satyr for a Supper and
 Coach-hire. The Theatre will be as
 terrible to 'em as a House of Correc-
 tion. The Ladies will then come oftner
 to the Houses, and there will be no
 need of complementing the Masks to
 get a full Pit. Those who make
 their Dialogues with those Creatures,
 their Entertainment at the Theatre, will
 abandon it. When the temptation they
 had to come there ceases, and their
 places will be fill'd by men of sense and
 honour, that can't now with pleasure
 see the brutality of such Blockheads
 treated so tenderly, as the Poets have
 us'd

us'd 'em lately, to engage Company, and draw an Audience together. This change will come of course when the writers for the Stage shall keep up to their Art, and remember that they are not to please but in order to instruct. Religious Assemblies will be then as fair an opportunity for the disorderly affligations of ill women, as the Pit or Gallery, especially if Churches and Meeting-houses are frequented by 'em now for those ends, which I suppose is too well known to be question'd. If women will after this wear their Vizards at the Play-house, why may not they be allow'd to do so there as well as elsewhere, and to take away that liberty from 'em, would be a point of Reformation, which has nothing in it but the form of Godliness. You'll pardon me for being so tedious on so trivial an objection, which, if you will have it, I had rather relinquish than make more words about it.

Ser. Well, what say you to the Poor, and the Actors and Actresses?

Beam. I know no more reason why the Actors should thrash and sweat for the poor, than any other profession.

Leave

Leave 'em at their choice, to be as charitable as they please, and this I will venture to say for them, that they give more away to their Brethren and their Families in want, and other good uses, than any other profession whatever of their number. Those who would have 'em oblig'd to dispose of part of their profits to the poor, ground their argument on a supposition, that they live a lazy sort of a life, and their business only contributes to our pleasures. By the way, you may be sure they know nothing of their business when they think 'tis a lazy Employment. I question if a Thresher in a Barn wastes himself more than 'tis necessary for a good Actor, or that any employ is more laborious than that which takes up the thought so much as it must do to learn, rehearse, and act their parts, especially such long ones, so humorous or heroic as some of them are. If 'tis because their business contributes only to our pleasure, why is there not here as in *Holland*, a Box set up in every Ordinary, to receive the alms of the good fellows who carouse there. The heat of the Wine often warms their Charity,

and

and they hope to compound for their debauches by their generosity to the poor. This is a very whimsical piece of Devotion. How many other professions are there, and perhaps manufactures, which are design'd for nothing but our pleasures, where there is not the least pretence of use unless for the bread they afford his Majestys Subjects. And why are not the Ribbond-weavers, Feather-shops, Perfumers, and a hundred more trades, in could name, order'd to set aside a portion of their gains, to make the Church Wardens and Overseers merry, and buy some new Gowns and Badges for the neighbouring Hospitals? *Sir* Well, Sir, since I see you are not weary of the dispute, let's hear what you would have done with the Actors and Actresses. There are abundance will tell you, they are an insufferable Generation, and will quote you Statutes which have call'd 'em as many names as they do one another in a scuffle.

Ben. I am not one of those that set up for reforming the Age, I find it difficult enough to keep my own actions free from censure, and if every body

they would be careful how they give offence to Religion or Manners, we might save a great many honest, well-meaning Gentlemen much trouble, and some select Societies a vast charge to little purpose. Those who are paid for the good they do, may study ways and means to reform the Players, and restore the Sobriety and Chastity of Oliver's Soldiers among the Army; for my part, I consider I am only accountable for my own errors. Those that suppose they are to answer for the errors of other men, ought to take care that the Age is as innocent as may be. Actors, as well as their Fellow Subjects, are liable to the Laws made against Immorality and Profaneness. If the Statutes were decently and impartially put in execution, the Players would be found as Governable as their Neighbours. This is certain, their business is not of its self unlawful. We have seen it prov'd, that the Drama is not only lawful but useful, of course then the Actors are no otherwise guilty than for the Crimes which their folly and looseness draw them into. And what Society of men is there who can plead perfect

perfect innocence. Their temptations are not more extraordinary than other mens, unless that their men and women converse behind the Scenes promiscuously, which may tempe'em to too much liberty: This may be easily provided against by those who have the charge of the Theatre. I believe Dancing-Schools and Balls have debauch't more women, and women of much more importance as to their families, tho' the concern of every Soul is equal, than all the Play-houses in Europe. The favours which the fair Sex have thrown away on some of the Actors, and the countenance men of Quality have put on the Function, by allowing 'em to be familiar with 'em, have been the occasion of the boldness of the men. They have taken up notions of honour from their company and books, which not being born with 'em, they cou'd not well manage, and have occasion'd several Riots, that may be easily prevented; If Gentlemen were more cautious how they make an acquaintance with 'em, not but that there are some of 'em even now (when I believe the Companies are not the most innocent which

which ever were) who know very well how to keep within their Character, and make themselves agreeable where ever they come. The women are ruin'd by the fondness of some Fops to be first in their good graces, and fancying it a high honour to have the smile of a *Roxana* or *Statira*. Let the Scene keepers be charg'd as strictly as they can to suffer no body to come among their Players. Let the Conversation of the Stage be as narrowly watcht as possible; and think on what ways you will to make their men modest and their women chaste: but if this is not presently to be effected, let us not lose a profitable and pleasant diversion, because there are inconveniencies attending it. You may by the same rule put down the Wells, and make *Tunbridge* and *Bath* a Desert, if you'd keep up no places where 'tis probable men and women will intreague. Who is there that has any knowledge of *Bath*, *Tunbridge* or *Epsom*, that has not heard of many unaccountable things done there, and as long as the liberty of Conversation is general at the Wells or elsewhere, there will be Amours, till the Age is of its self grown purer. We might name the
the

the meetings at *Islington*, *Lambeth*, &c.
but they are so infamous, that they
ought to be treated like the *Confort* at
Steyney or *Moorfields*. On the whole, if
I were to give my sentiments of the Stage,
I should not make any alteration in the
form of its management as 'tis at present:
I shou'd be for laying a mulct, or some
other punishment, on those who are
faulty in their offices relating to't. The
person who presides over the examining
all Plays shou'd be answerable for the
errors in them, as much as the Licencers
of Books were for what was offensive to
Religion or the State, while the Press
was under their Jurisdiction. But as the
ill consequences of things brought on
the Stage, which are injurious to Consci-
ence or Government, are more dangerous
than such as are printed in the Books or
Pamphlets which are publish'd, so the
punishment shou'd be severer than what
has been laid on those offenders. And
the Officer in whose power 'tis to Licence
or forbid any Play the Stage, ought to
have some consideration from the Poet
for the risque he runs on his account.
For let a man be never so exact, some-
thing may escape him in the passions of a
Tra-

Tragedy, or freedom of Comick conversation, which may not every where agree with our duty to Heaven and our Neighbour. 'Twill be difficult for our Farce-makers to do any thing which this person will think tolerable, when he is himself narrowly observ'd. And I believe those that know better are so much asham'd of the weakness they gave way to, that there will be no complaint against 'em for the future. I must do Mr Collier the Justice to confess, I believe his Books have been the occasion that the Town lookt nicely into the Theatre, and have thence been disgust-ed with what they thought too vitious, which has deterr'd many from venturing there lately and set the Poets on their guard how they run into their former extravagance, or make sallies from their art any more to please a herd of Fops and Scoundrels, whose company can neither support 'em, nor their applause give 'em the least hopes of an eternal name. Their praise will change with their humours, tho they will be constant to one character of folly and lewdness, which will never get those who endeavour to please 'em any lasting Credit, for nothing

thing but true merit is immortal.

Ben. You have convinc'd me Gentlemen, of the unreasonableness of those people, who are perpetually declaring against the Stage, and I must own my self of your opinion, that its present Directors may be as serviceable towards freeing it from Immorality and Profaneness, as any new person some would have set over it. I have quite another notion of the art than I had a week ago, tho I was always inclin'd to believe my self in the wrong, being extreamly pleas'd with Dramatical Representattons. We have had a drug of 'em lately, Women and Boys have attempted to divert the Town. They have sometimes succeeded, which encourages every little Rhimer to strut in Buskins. I am as much a Servant to the fair, as the most complaisant, but they have never yet charm'd me on the Stage, unless with their Action. I could never compliment 'em at the expence of my understanding, and love the Stage too well to flatter any one to write for't, that I think can't support it.

Sav. Then you would have nobody write who is not fortunate?

O.

Beam.

Beau. Hold, I must answer for the Gentleman. A man may not be fortunate at one time, and yet succeed at another. An Audience may be in an ill humour one day, and in too good a one the next. How many things have taken and been damnd out of a whim. VVhere an author keeps to nature he must first or last please, and instruction will always accompany the pleasure.

Beu. You forgot where we were to adjourn, 'tis near Five, and I am loath to miss the opportunity of having your company at the Play.

Sav. I am engag'd to go with you, and I would not have us part now, till we have seen it together.

Beau. When I come out 'twas to spend the evening with you, and I think we can't do it better.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

P 5. l. 18. r. *prodge* *volunt* : p. 21. l. 8. r. *delbare* *Poete* :
 p. 29. l. 5. *dele on* : p. 30. l. 27. r. *Laivia* : p. 40. l. 7. r.
lud : p. 43. l. 8. r. *at a visit* : p. 50. l. 8. r. *wasting* : p. 59.
 l. 24. r. *pitiful mirth* : p. 62. l. 12. r. *his own* : p. 73. l. 6. *dele*
in : p. 121. l. 22. r. *if he had* : p. 127. l. 15. *add not* : p. 137.
 l. 10. r. *decent and innocent* : p. 142. l. 6. r. *profeft* : p. 159.
 l. 3. r. *thas done* : p. 163. l. 1. r. *or obstinaty* : p. 173. l. 14. r.
Hereick : p. 175. l. 18. r. *more*.

There are some other Print-faults, which the Reader will easily correct.



